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# **THE BRITISH STUDENT MOVEMENT 1965-1972**

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## SUMMARY

This thesis outlines the development of the protests by students which took place in Britain from 1965 to 1972, and investigates the reasons for the occurrence of these protests at that particular time. This inquiry has used national and student newspapers, extensive archive material, secondary sources, and oral history interviews to carry out these aims.

In particular, this thesis will suggest that student protest can only be understood in the light of changes in attitudes to authority in the post-war period. The position of young people in society was transformed in the decades following the Second World War, and this change was itself the result of social, economic and cultural changes which will be considered as part of this thesis. It will be argued that deterministic interpretations, which have suggested that student protest was the result of revolutionary politics, group conformity, rebellion against parental or social disciplines, or rapid university expansion, have been mistaken. Instead, students took part in protests upon specific issues about which they felt strongly, usually because they believed that those in authority had committed injustices. This protest could only take place, therefore, once prevailing attitudes to authority had changed, and students felt that it was both possible and acceptable to challenge the decisions of those who were in authority.

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To my mother and late father.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

A.U.T.	Association of University Teachers
B.C.P.V.	British Campaign (sometimes Council) for Peace in Vietnam
B.L.P.E.S.	British Library of Political and Economic Science
C.A.T.	College of Advanced Technology
C.I.A.	Central Intelligence Agency
C.N.D.	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
C.P.G.B.	Communist Party of Great Britain
D.E.S.	Department of Education and Science
E.G.M.	Extraordinary General Meeting
I.M.G.	International Marxist Group
I.S.	International Socialism
J.C.R.	Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire
L.S.E.	London School of Economics
M.R.C.	Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick
N.A.L.S.O.	National Association of Labour Student Organisations
N.L.F.	National Liberation Front (Vietnam).
N.S.A. (U.S.A.)	National Student Association of the United States of America
N.U.S.	National Union of Students
R.S.A.	Radical Student Alliance
R.S.S.F.	Revolutionary Student Socialist Federation
S.D.S.	Students for a Democratic Society
S.D.S.	Socialistische Deutsche Studentenbund

S.N.C.C.	Student Non-violent (later National) Co-ordinating Committee
T.U.C.	Trades Union Congress
U.G.C.	University Grants Committee
U.G.M.	Union General Meeting
U.J.C.-m.l.	Union des Jeunesse Communiste marxistes-leninistes
V.S.C.	Vietnam Solidarity Campaign

## INTRODUCTION

Speaking against the American military intervention in Vietnam, in New York on 4 April 1967, Martin Luther King acknowledged that

even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy...Nor does the human spirit move without great difficulty against all the apathy of conformist thought within one's own bosom and in the surrounding world. Moreover, when the issues at hand seem as perplexed as they often do in the case of this dreadful conflict we are always on the verge of being mesmerized by uncertainty; but we must move on.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. King's words have particular relevance to this study, since it will aim to explain why large numbers of British students took part in acts of protest in the late 1960s, both against the policies of their national and university governments. From 1965 onward, increasing numbers of British students took part in a variety of protests, notably against the American military intervention in Vietnam (see chapters 2 and 6). In March 1967 students at the London School of Economics decided to hold a sit-down demonstration in the entrance hall of the School, and resolved to stay there until the School's authorities changed their decision to suspend two students from the School. This was the first 'sit-in' to take place at a British educational institution. More protests, including sit-ins, took place around Britain in the subsequent year, reaching a peak in frequency and size in 1968, and then declining from that point onward. These protests were a new phenomenon. They affected most higher educational institutions in Britain in the late 1960s, and they took place within the context of larger protests by young people in a number of other countries, particularly America, France, Germany, and Italy. The

chapters which follow will establish the details of what happened during the protests which took place in Britain, and the reasons for their occurrence.

The protests which took place in Britain in the 1960s were the subject of sometimes intense contemporary speculation as to their origins, especially by the press, as will be discussed, particularly in chapter 6. While a crisis in education and in social values was highlighted and condemned by many, others gloried in and glorified the rebellion of so many young people (see chapters 4 and 6). These two opposing outlooks have now become the main schools of thought within the battle which has blighted attempts to interpret the events of the 1960s. Whether accurately or not, the decade has been identified as a period of profound change in British society. As early as 1967 Philip Larkin expressed his feeling that 'sexual intercourse began in nineteen sixty-three' and that

Up until then there'd only been  
A sort of bargaining,  
A wrangle for a ring,  
A shame that started at sixteen,  
And spread to everything.<sup>2</sup>

It has been suggested that 'today...the 60s seem the most inescapable of all those nostalgia-girt decades. Whether hymned by ageing hippies, still wreathed in rosy fantasies, or vilified by contemporary politicians, desperately hunting an easy scapegoat for over-complex ills, the image remains: something happened'.<sup>3</sup> Attempts to establish the nature of that 'something', of its impact upon society, and whether it was positive or negative, have become central considerations for



the majority of the numerous investigations into the events of the 1960s. It is within this context that the student protest which took place in Britain has been examined, although even these texts have only given limited attention to the subject. Fleeting mention of these protests is often made in accounts of the events of the decade, or particular aspects of the decade, but few studies have been devoted to student protest in particular.<sup>4</sup> These latter accounts have either taken the form of outlines of the protest which took place around the world, or protests in individual countries such as France and America (see chapter 7). Yet while studies of events in individual countries have been carried out, there had not been a detailed examination of the British student movement in its own right until the inception of this thesis.

This study will be the first such account of the student movement and its origins. This may be surprising, especially in the light of the existence of numerous works on events in other countries, and the identification of British student protests as forming a part of the 'identity' of the decade. In 1993, for example, one participant in the December 1968 sit-in at Bristol University described 1968 as 'the year of the Beatles' White Album and Technicolor clothes, but it was also the year of the Vietnam demo, the Che Guevara poster...[sic] and the student sit-in'.<sup>5</sup> Christopher Booker, in his study of the 1960s, has argued that 'we all have in our heads a jumble of images from the dream landscape of those years - the heyday of the Beatles and Swinging London, mini-skirts and stage nudity, sexual permissiveness and drug-taking, hippies and flower power, television satire and student protest, C.N.D. and American race riots, the Vietnam War and the first moon landing'.<sup>6</sup> Yet the work by A. Z.

Ehrlich on the relationship between the Leninist organisations and the student movement is the nearest that any previous work has come to providing an account of the student protest of the 1960s,<sup>6</sup> and Ehrlich suggested that the creation of a history devoted to the student movement alone would probably prove to be impossible for any historian because of the scale of the task.<sup>7</sup> The following chapters will provide such a history, including the first detailed consideration of the development of the anti-Vietnam War Campaign in Britain.

A number of flaws have affected the interpretation of events in those few general accounts of international student protest which touch upon the student protest which took place in Britain in the 1960s. The works of Ronald Fraser and of David Caute have become the two standard texts in student protest, for example, and there is a striking lack of detail, and understanding of detail, in both of these pieces.<sup>8</sup> This is perhaps understandable in the context of studies of protest movements in a variety of countries, but British student protests have not been examined in the light of the peculiarities of British society, and the changes which were taking place within that society. Rather, they have been seen as examples of a world-wide phenomenon with approximately similar origins. Not only does this form of study lead to a lack of consideration for local differences, but it does not allow for a detailed investigation. These studies are therefore usually based upon reference to limited sources: Ronald Fraser's work is dominated by oral history, while national newspapers provide the overwhelming majority of the references for David Caute. This failure to use a variety of sources has led to an inability to gain an accurate overview of trends and events in the countries which have been covered by these general works, including Britain.

This has led to the use of assumptions, and the attendant inaccuracies have led to fundamental flaws in the conclusions which have been reached about the origins of student protest in Britain in the 1960s. This use of assumptions has also had a negative effect upon other attempts to explain student protest, notably those made by contemporary journalists. Indeed, the media construct of the 1960s in general, which was begun in the 1960s, has had a profound influence upon subsequent attempts to understand that decade. It has been argued that 'when asked about the sixties, there seems to be a qualitative difference in people's response - they seem to be confused about what really happened [to them] and what the media had said was happening. This kind of conceptualising seems true across the social board. Most people under forty, in describing the sixties, at least defer to the media sixties'.<sup>9</sup> Not only did assumptions rather than investigation inform the conclusions reached by the media in the 1960s, then, but these conclusions have since become accepted in subsequent works as being grounded upon fact or common sense.

These factors have combined with the positive or negative interpretations of the events of the 1960s which were mentioned above to result in a number of inaccurate interpretations of the origins of student protest in Britain. It has been argued, for example, that student protest was carried out by a minority of revolutionary students, or that those students who took part in protest had been duped by revolutionaries. Other explanations have highlighted the supposedly negative effects of the rapid expansion in student numbers which took place in the 1960s (see chapter 1), the social background of student protesters, or the attitudes to discipline which their parents displayed toward them (see chapter 3).

Group conformity has also been identified as an influence, as well as the copying of the example of the young people who engaged in protests in other countries (see chapter 7). All of these viewpoints will be discussed in the following chapters, and it will be demonstrated that they are inaccurate, that they are based upon assumption instead of investigation, and that they are patronising in their denial that individual students took part in protests because they felt strongly about the issues which had prompted their protest.

Moreover, it will be argued that *student protest can only be understood in* the light of changes in attitudes to authority. This consideration has not been completely ignored in the past: Ronald Fraser, for example, has indicated that *new attitudes to authority should be noted when attempting to locate the origins* of student protest. Yet in Fraser's work, as in those few other works where attitudes to authority have been highlighted, the role of changes in these attitudes has been sidelined or misinterpreted, often because of fundamental misinterpretations of the events themselves which has led to the identification of other factors as being the causes of student protest. Often, other agendas have also resulted in positive or negative reactions to protests as challenges to authority, so that the moral interpretation of such challenges has taken priority over analyses of the origins and impact of these changes. This will be rectified in the subsequent chapters, culminating in a detailed discussion in chapter 5. The student protest which took place in the 1960s will therefore be examined within the context of important changes in norms of behaviour and attitudes to those in authority within British society which have not been given their due weight, nor careful and balanced consideration, in the past.

This will be made possible by the detailed study and use of a number of sources. Extensive use will be made of archive material, much of which has never been used before, notably the large deposit which has been made by the National Union of Students (N.U.S.) at the Modern Records Centre (M.R.C.) at the University of Warwick. The contents of this archive were effectively unavailable for use by researchers until it was catalogued by the author in 1994. The newspapers of the Students' Unions of 11 universities have been consulted in detail, and this is the first time that these newspapers have been used as a source for an account of the student protest which took place in Britain in the 1960s. Other sources which will be used to provide both information and contemporary opinions include periodicals, national newspapers, and a number of contemporary publications. Subsequent accounts, academic texts, and oral interviews, will also be used. A survey of academic staff at the University of Warwick which was carried out by the author in 1994 and 1995 will be used extensively in chapter 3.

Before embarking upon the writing of this history, however, it is first necessary to establish a number of parameters, and to define key terms. For example, the year 1965 has been chosen as the starting point because before that date student protests were rare, while they escalated in terms of frequency and in the numbers of students involved from 1965 onward. The period before 1965 will be discussed in the next chapter. After 1972 student protest declined, although it did not disappear. This period will be outlined in the epilogue.

The term 'British' will include only Great Britain. It will not include the whole of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland. While protests by

students do appear to have played a role in the escalation of the conflict in that province in the late 1960s, it would be impossible to give the appropriate attention either to Northern Ireland or to the rest of the United Kingdom if the events which took place in Northern Ireland were also discussed here. Moreover, the issues which prompted such protest in Northern Ireland were fundamentally different to those about which students in the rest of the United Kingdom protested. It would be possible to devote an entirely separate study to student protest in Northern Ireland alone. For these reasons, the discussions which will take place in the following chapters will concentrate upon events in England, Scotland, and Wales.

By 'student' will be meant those people who were 18 years of age or over, and who were attending an institution of higher or further education for the attainment of a degree or equivalent qualification. It will therefore exclude schoolchildren. It will be found that among those protests which took place at institutions of education, most will refer to those which occurred at universities, although protests at colleges and polytechnics will be discussed, and students from these institutions also took part in demonstrations. Not only did more protests take place at universities, thus making it more likely that university protests would represent the bulk of those included here, but universities had been in existence for centuries by the 1960s, while polytechnics were created in the late 1960s, making it easier to place the changes which took place in universities in the 1960s within a wider historical context. A further consideration is that, with a few notable exceptions, it was protests at universities which received most attention from the press and other contemporary observers

in their attempts to establish what was wrong with the 'youth of today' and why traditional norms of behaviour at these institutions were being ignored or transformed.

Among all of the terms which will be used in this thesis, perhaps the most difficult to define is 'student movement'. It has had a number of meanings. In Eric Ashby and Mary Anderson's account of the *Rise of the Student Estate in Britain*, for example, the term is used with unclear meaning. They use it most often with regard to the 1930s and seem to be referring to the awakening of a 'social conscience' among students. This is open to interpretation, however, since they could be referring to the student body as a whole. Even in the 1960s it did not have a clear meaning; the editor of the Liverpool student newspaper *Guild Gazette* wrote in 1968 that 'we are a mass movement - 400,000 of us' and made it clear that he felt that the membership of the N.U.S. and the student movement were synonymous. Some saw the 'student movement' as a revolutionary movement (see chapter 4), but most students and observers seem to have used the term when referring to the student protest which suddenly began to take place in the late 1960s. One N.U.S. publication which was written in 1969, for example, highlighted 'the upsurge of mass based and militant student activity that has taken place over the past 2½ years'. It argued that 'this is most marked in comparison with the pre-Robbins era. The Student Movement has developed precisely because it is no longer prepared to tolerate many of the prevailing conditions that exist in higher education'.<sup>10</sup> The term will therefore be used by the author to refer to the student protest which took place in the 1960s in the chapters which follow. Yet, if the term 'movement' is taken to mean 'a course or

series of actions and endeavours on the part of a body of persons, moving or tending more or less continuously towards some special end', then in many respects the application of the name 'student movement' to the student protest of the 1960s is inaccurate.<sup>11</sup> The student movement consisted of a number of different protest movements, and student protest was often localised, without common national objectives, or a national organisation. Student participation in these protests was also often limited and transitory. It could be argued, then, that in this study the term 'student movement' has been somewhat arbitrarily applied as an umbrella term. Yet this protest did have the common factors of being carried out by students, or mainly by students, as well as usually being based upon the desire to change the opinions or policies of members of the older generation. In this sense the use of the term 'student movement' is not the result of the necessity for a tidy and all-inclusive term, but it refers to a genuine movement among students, i.e., the use of protest to challenge decisions, and to gain a voice in decision making processes.

Extensive reference to 'protest' has already been made, and it would perhaps be appropriate to outline the ways in which it will be applied in subsequent chapters. It has already been suggested that student protest has often been identified as having been revolutionary in origin and intent. It has also been argued that this is a mistaken interpretation, thus making it impossible to describe student protest in the 1960s as 'radical' direct action (see chapter 4). While some students were members of revolutionary organisations, most were not, and took part in protests as a result of a moral objection to decisions or actions by those in positions of authority. If protest can be defined as being 'to bear witness in



public', it can take the form of opposition to an action, decision or belief, while also promoting alternatives.<sup>12</sup> It can be aimed at changing decisions, or at converting and attracting supporters. It can also take the form of a statement or action of opposition, with public disassociation as its sole aim. Whatever its aims, protest is an attempt to place a check upon those in authority, and it is a means of influencing decisions and thereby playing a role in government. Protests by students in the 1960s usually took the form of statements or actions in opposition to the actions or decisions of university or national governments. In this sense, protests can refer simply to oral protestations of opposition, but this study will concern itself with something which was more militant, such as protest in the form of the lobbying of MPs, rallies, demonstrations, and sit-ins, etc., because these were new phenomena of student behaviour in the 1960s. They were also attempts to play a role in democratic government by voicing opinions and objections. In the case of sit-ins, these were often prompted by student desires to play a recognised and formal role within university governments. It will be the central thesis of this work therefore that these protests could only take place when young people felt that they could challenge those in authority, just as Martin Luther King noted in the speech which was quoted at the beginning of this introduction and that this was a new development. The student protest of the 1960s can only be understood in the light of this change.

Indeed, in March 1965 Bob Dylan reached number nine in the UK singles chart with 'The Times They Are A' Changin''. In this, Dylan's first hit in the UK, Dylan requested 'Come mothers, come fathers throughout the land/ And don't criticise what you don't understand/ Your sons and your daughters are

beyond your command/ Your old road is rapidly ageing/ Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand/ For the times they are a' changin'".<sup>13</sup> Dylan's prophetic song became a hit at the very beginning of the development of student protest in Britain. This study will attempt to provide some understanding of the changes which Dylan referred to, in the hope of providing an explanation for the willingness of many students in the late 1960s to challenge the 'apathy of conformist thought' which Martin Luther King referred to, in contrast to the behaviour of previous generations of students.

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<sup>1</sup> 'A Time to Break Silence', quoted in James Melvin Washington (ed), *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (HarperCollins, 1986), p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Larkin, 'Annus Mirabilis' in *Collected Poems* (Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathon Green, *Days in the Life: Voices from the English Underground 1961-1971* (Heinemann, 1988), p. vii.

<sup>4</sup> For a general history of the 1960s see Bernard Levin, *The Pendulum Years: Britain and the 60s* (Spectre, 1989, first published by Jonathan Cape, 1970). David Martin (ed), *Anarchy and Culture: The Problem of the Contemporary University* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969) devotes several chapters to the student protest in the 1960s, while Margaret Anne Rooke, *Anarchy and Apathy: Student Unrest 1968-1970* (Hamish Hamilton, 1971) provides an extreme example of an irrational polemic against student protests which is not based upon research and which is fundamentally inaccurate.

<sup>5</sup> *Guardian Education*, 7 December 1992, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Booker, *The Neophiliacs: The Revolution in English Life in the fifties and sixties* (Pimlico, 1992), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> See the Introduction to A. Z. Ehrlich, 'The Leninist Organisations in Britain and the Student Movement 1966 - 1972' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1981).

<sup>8</sup> Ronald Fraser, *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt* (Chatto and Windus, 1988), and David Caute, *Sixty-Eight: The Year of the Barricades* (Hamish Hamilton, 1988).

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Robert Murphy, *Sixties British Cinema* (British Film Institute, 1988), p. 1 from Peter York, 'Recycling the Sixties', reprinted in *Style Wars* (Sidgewick and Jackson, 1980), p. 182. See also Christopher Booker, *The Neophiliacs* (Pimlico, 1992), for an attempt at attacking the myths about the 1960s.

<sup>10</sup> 'The National Union of Students: The Problems that Face Us', March 1969, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 142/MI, file 9.

<sup>11</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, Second Edition, vol. X (Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 35.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, vol. XII, pp. 539 and 684-5.

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<sup>13</sup> Bob Dylan 'The Times They Are A' Changin'', from the Album of the same name (Columbia, 1967).

## CHAPTER 1

### CHANGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT PROTEST BEFORE 1965

This chapter will place the student movement within its historical context. Such an exercise will also introduce information which will be necessary to the discussions in subsequent chapters. In particular, the development of higher education, university government, and student protest in Britain before 1965 will be outlined, and their impact upon the student movement will be assessed.

This exercise will begin with an examination of the changes in higher education in the twentieth century, which, until 1963, took the form of steady and consistent growth both in the numbers of universities and the students attending them. By 1957 eleven new universities had been added to the six ancient universities and the three universities founded in the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The numbers of students attending these institutions rose from 20,000 in 1900-01, to 50,000 in 1938-39, and to 82,000 in 1954-55: a consistent and unspectacular increase (see table 1, appendix 1). The 1960s, however, was a period of rapid, and spectacular, expansion in higher education. New universities were founded, beginning with the University of Sussex in 1961, which was followed by the University of Keele in 1962. Authority for the establishment of six further universities was given by the government in 1960 and 1961, and these eventually became the universities of East Anglia (1963), York (1963), Essex (1964), Lancaster (1964), Kent (1965), and Warwick (1965).<sup>2</sup> In 1963 Kings College, of Durham University, became Newcastle University; Strathclyde University was created in 1964, and in 1967 Dundee University was founded. The previous year a number of Colleges of Advanced Technology (C.A.T.s) had also been upgraded to university status, becoming the universities of Aston, Bath, Bradford, Brunel, City, Heriot-Watt, Loughborough, and Surrey. Salford C.A.T. was upgraded to

become a university in 1967. Between 1960 and 1970, then, the number of universities doubled, from twenty to forty.

The number of students attending university also more than doubled in the 1960s, as a result of the implementation of legislation following the recommendations of the *Anderson* (1960) and *Robbins* (1963) reports. The former report was responsible for the introduction of a state grant to all students with the relevant 'A' level qualifications attending first degree courses at British universities.<sup>3</sup> Until 1961 student funding took the form of state scholarships, local authority awards, or self finance. Yet by the late 1950s the overwhelming majority of students received some form of state funding: in the 1958-59 academic year 47,000 students in England and Wales received local authority awards, and 12,000 received state scholarships. Basing its recommendations on a modest predicted increase in student numbers to 135,000, with 'the possibility of a later increase of another 35,000 or 40,000 beyond that figure', the Anderson report recommended the creation of a standard, national grant system which was not based upon competition, but upon the attainment of the relevant qualifications and a university place, in order that improved educational facilities 'be available to those who can profit from them'. The system was introduced, with awards related to parental income, in the 1961-62 academic year. The authors of the Anderson report could not have predicted the rate of expansion in student numbers which followed the *Robbins Report*, and the financial burden on the state which this would create. Nonetheless, the establishment of this grant system allowed students who would not otherwise have been able to afford the

financial burden of attending university, to take advantage of the changes resulting from the *Robbins Report*.

The Robbins Committee was established in 1961 in response to the increased demand, both actual and predicted, for higher education.<sup>4</sup> Among the stated reasons for its establishment were the needs of industry, the need for competitiveness with other countries, and improvements in further education, such as at C.A.T.s, which prompted the need for a re-appraisal of the status of some institutions. The increased quantity of public money which was being used to fund universities also made improvements in higher education a matter of public interest (see below).<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the expectations of common standards of education for all, and access to education for all, which informed and were confirmed by the Education Act of 1944, may also have played a role.<sup>6</sup> Yet perhaps the most important consideration was the predicted increase in the numbers of those who were qualified to attend university. After the 1944 Education Act the numbers of people remaining in full time education until the age of 17 rose from 4 per cent in 1938 to 15 per cent in 1962. Moreover, the proportion of those people who attained the minimum university entrance qualification of two 'A' levels rose from 4.3 per cent of the age group up to the age of 19 in 1954, to 6.9 per cent in 1961. This would have resulted in an increase in the numbers, both absolute and as a proportion of the age group, who wanted to attend university, even if the birth rate had remained constant. Yet the rise in the birth rate which took place toward the end of the Second World War resulted in a predicted increase in the number of 18-year olds from 642,000 in 1954, to 714,000 in 1961, and to 963,000 in 1965, thereby creating a dramatic



increase in the number of people who would be qualified to attend university in the 1960s.<sup>7</sup> The Robbins Committee was therefore given the task of providing recommendations for the future of higher education in Britain in the light both of the needs of the nation, and those of future, prospective, students. It rejected the possibility of maintaining student numbers as they were, which would have restricted access to higher education for the growing number of people with the necessary qualifications. Instead, it favoured the belief that ‘courses of higher education should be available for all those who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so’.<sup>8</sup> As a result, it was recognised that a rapid expansion of higher education would be necessary in order to cope with the increased demand for places: the Committee predicted an increase in the number of students from 142,000 in 1963-64, to 200,000 by 1968-69 (see table 2, appendix 1) and recommended a corresponding increase in the number of places available at universities. When the recommendations of the *Report* were implemented, however, student numbers rose spectacularly from 119,004 in 1962-63, to 211,294 in 1968-69, and to 227,956 in 1970-71 (see table 2, appendix 1).<sup>9</sup> The number of female students nearly tripled, rising from 26,269 in 1960-61 to 69,707 in 1971-72. The upgrading of C.A.T.s to university status was also carried out as a result of the *Report*’s recommendations, though, as has been noted, the creation of other universities in the 1960s was carried out independently of the *Report*’s recommendations.

With the increase in the number of universities, and the increase in the number of students, there was also a corresponding increase in the numbers of university staff. As table 5, appendix 1, illustrates, staff numbers only rose from

10,490 in 1953-54, to 13,580 in 1960-61, in response to the gradual expansion of higher education at that time. By 1970-71, however, this figure had more than doubled, to 27,974, with dramatic increases in the numbers of staff of all grades. A further development was the increase in the numbers of students, both absolutely and as a proportion of the total student body, who lived away from home, in halls of residence or in lodgings. In 1960-61 there were 23,611 full time students in Britain who lived at home, and this number had only increased to 36,590 by 1970.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, the numbers of those living in halls of residence increased over the same period from 29,474 to 88,761, while those living in lodgings increased in number from 54,614 to 100,786.

Finally, there was a similar expansion in the numbers attending Colleges of Education and further education, along with the creation of a 'binary system' of education. Colleges of Education, which became the new name for Teacher Training Colleges following the recommendation of the *Robbins Report*, gained the ability to grant degrees in the form of the B. Ed., and also increased their student numbers rapidly in the 1960s following a steady development throughout the century. From their 1962-63 total of 43,694 students, they more than doubled in size, having reached a total of 107,315 students in 1970-71 (see table 3, appendix 1). The numbers of students in further education also increased steadily throughout the century (see table 1, appendix 1), and then expanded swiftly in the 1960s. By 1962-63, there were 28,450 students in further education (see table 3, appendix 1), and by 1970-71 this figure had more than tripled to 87,769. This increase was accompanied, after April 1965, by the creation of a 'binary system' of education in which a more centralised structure was to be created for the

disparate colleges of further education by uniting them in the form of polytechnics.<sup>11</sup> This created a 'two-tier' system of education (though such a description was vehemently denied at the time) in which degrees could be gained from universities or polytechnics. Yet unlike universities (see below), these latter institutions were to receive their funding, and therefore their source of developmental control, directly from the government.

This spectacular expansion in higher education was significant for a number of reasons. Higher education gained a new place of importance both in society and in the economy: the *Robbins Report* was the third most popular government report ever in terms of sales, after the *Beveridge Report* on social insurance and *Lord Denning's Report* on the Profumo affair, and in recognition of the growing importance of education, the Ministry of Education became the Department of Education and Science in 1964, with a Secretary of State at its head. The growing role of the government, particularly in providing finance for higher education, had been one of the motivating factors behind the formation of the Robbins Committee, and this role continued to grow in proportionate, and particularly absolute terms, while universities expanded in the 1960s. In 1935-6, for example, the government had provided £2,076,791, or 34.3 per cent of the total higher education funding. By 1960-61 this had risen to £49,037,000, or 72.7 of the total.<sup>12</sup> By 1966-67 state funding had increased to £139,709,000, or 73.8 per cent of the total.<sup>13</sup> The authors of the *Robbins Report* therefore noted that in the light of this increase in the importance of public money to universities 'it is only natural that the general direction of their development has come to be regarded as a matter of public interest'.<sup>14</sup> As a result, although the University

Grants Committee (U.G.C.) described universities as 'independent, self-governing institutions', for which it acted as the intermediary to 'enable public funds to flow into the universities without direct governmental intervention', the government attached conditions to U.G.C. allocations of money on the basis of 'the demand of students for university places, national needs for qualified graduates and the likely availability of resources'.<sup>15</sup> This led, later in the decade, to allegations by the far left that the university expansion, students' needs, educational requirements, and university development, were being subordinated to the demands of the modern economy, and this was named by commentators as a cause of student protest. This, and its implications for the student movement, will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Yet perhaps most importantly, the very expansion of student numbers was blamed later in the decade for causing student protests. It was argued that the expansion had encouraged working class students to attend universities and that student protest was a result of these students, and other students whose parents had not attended university, not knowing how to behave once they were there. This will be discussed in Chapter 4, as will the suggestion that the expansion caused protests because of overcrowded facilities and poor staff-student ratios which had failed to keep up with the expansion of student numbers.

The role of students in university government will also be discussed in later chapters, and it will be beneficial to these later discussions to consider the evolution of university government here. As has already been noted, universities were, in theory at least, independent bodies, with the ability to govern themselves, and this included the allocation of funds within each university.

Nonetheless, there was no standard governmental structure for all universities: individual universities evolved their own systems according to their own circumstances.<sup>16</sup> Yet by 1965, despite differences in detail at each university, the governments of most universities had developed common structures. These were organised around a combination of statute and convention, and were founded upon the guiding principle of preserving the authority of academic staff over the government of the university. By the 1960s the university governmental system had developed into a two-tier structure, based upon the Senate and the Council. The former body dealt with academic policy within the individual university, and was constituted from members of the academic staff of that university. The latter body, the Council, dealt with non-academic matters such as finance and building, and included both academic and non-academic members, such as members of the local community, local government, and local industry. Convention usually dictated that a Council rarely challenged decisions of the Senate. Above these bodies in the university government was the Court which, although it was the supreme governing body of the university, was usually a rubber-stamp body. It usually met only once a year to approve the decisions of the Senate and Council, and rarely challenged the decisions of these bodies. Uniting this structure was the vice-chancellor, who acted as chair to many of the central committees, including Senate and Council, and who also usually acted as the representative of the university with the national government. A registrar acted as the head of the administrative structure.

University governmental structures evolved into a system of government from below which makes it extremely difficult (and indeed probably futile) to

attempt to locate the centre of a university's authority. Within this system a highly consultative and complex structure of committees and sub-committees which included, in theory, the representatives of all interested parties, acted to ensure that the best interests of the academic community as a whole were served at all levels, from department, to faculty, and ultimately to university-wide levels. Committees, which included those on discipline, library facilities, buildings, finance, etc., were able to make decisions on the areas which were exclusive to their interests, as well as being able to work within the wider structure, so that a committee or interest group could make recommendations or representations to other committees or bodies which dealt with wider or different areas of interest. Interest groups and committees were therefore able, via their representatives, to make demands upon the resources which were under the control of other committees or bodies. Such a system, then, allowed for decisions to be made autonomously and democratically by those individuals or groups whom such decisions affected, as well as allowing members of the academic community to contribute to the wider government of the university as a whole. It was, supposedly, a system which helped to preserve academic freedom by relying upon an all-inclusive participatory form of democracy instead of taking the form of commandments from a small group at the head of a pyramidal hierarchy.

Yet university governments appear to have failed to live up to this ideal, and this was to be a key issue in student protest in the 1960s (see next chapter). Indeed, by 1965 university governments were not representative of the whole academic communities of individual universities. In the nineteenth century, when professorial staff had formed the majority of the academic community, and when

students had been excluded from consideration as members of an academic community, university government, which was dominated by professorial staff, was, perhaps, a representative system. By 1965, when the nature of the academic community had changed, and university government had failed to keep pace with this change, the system of government was no longer representative of the academic community as a whole. For example, table 5, appendix 1, makes it clear that, by 1965, non-professorial staff were the largest group of academic staff. As well as professorial staff, academics were divided in status into lecturers, senior lecturers, and readers, as a result of evolution over time. Yet, although they campaigned for representation within university governments, non-professorial academics were usually only given access to representation up to faculty level. Where they did gain representation on higher levels, such as Senate, they were usually not given representation in numbers which were in proportion to their numbers in the academic community. The Robbins Committee therefore noted that ‘in English civic universities, in Wales and in Scotland, professors outnumber other academic staff on the senate in all cases where we have information and often by five or even ten to one’.<sup>17</sup> Professorial staff sought to maintain their position of power within the university system of government, despite the contradiction with the ethos of democratic university administration which this established. In 1965 the Association of University Teachers (A.U.T.) published a report on *University Government and Organisation* which argued that as a result of the poor representation of non-professorial staff, ‘the spirit of the original constitution’ of representative democratic government for the whole academic community ‘has been lost, and the same structure now exerts its

influence in contradiction to that spirit'. Moreover, the evolution of departments, which were rarely mentioned in university statutes or charters, and the evolution of the role of the professor as the head of department, meant that 'in default of any provision within charter or statute the formal position is normally that one professor, as head of department, and only he, can make decisions on behalf of the department. Such decisions may be one-sided and out of touch with the living experience of the department'.<sup>18</sup> Two years previously the Robbins Committee had noted that 'both on questions of major policy and in the more intimate running of faculties and departments, the non-professorial members of staff of such universities are said to feel that they have an inadequate share in determining the evolution of the society of which they are members'.<sup>19</sup>

Nonetheless, non-professorial staff seem to have had more success in gaining representation within university governments than students. The age of majority remained at 21 until it was reduced to 18 in 1970, meaning that students did not have the right to vote in parliamentary elections, and their universities acted *in loco parentis* (see chapter 5), which affected their ability to gain access to representation within universities. For example, in 1966 the National Union of Students (N.U.S.) produced a pamphlet on *Student Participation in College Government* which provides a detailed description of student representation in the governments of all of the universities and colleges in Britain.<sup>20</sup> Only Bristol University allowed students to sit upon its Senate, and no universities allowed students to be represented upon their Councils. Only Birkbeck College allowed students be represented on its Finance Committee, and only Enfield College allowed students to sit upon its Academic Board. Students were represented upon



Disciplinary Committees only at Salford University, Sunderland College, and the University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology (U.W.I.S.T.), while only University College Bangor and Liverpool University deemed it necessary for students to be represented upon their Student Welfare Committees. In contrast, student representation upon more peripheral committees was relatively common: thirteen universities allowed student representatives on their Athletics Committees. Even where representation seemed to exist, it appears that it usually took the form of consultation rather than active representation and participation within the decision making process. Furthermore, as one student of the 1960s, Colin Crouch, complained

the length of time taken by decision making in a university is often a safeguard of the freedom of the academic staff, but the result of it as it faces the student in a large university is something like Kafka's castle. One is never certain what is going to happen or why it happens. As soon as a student learns that a committee in the college is prepared to take a certain step, he learns of a plethora of groups who will probably prevent it ever occurring for reasons of whose excellence he is assured, but of whose precise contents he is never informed.<sup>21</sup>

Students, then, appear to have felt excluded from the decision making process in universities, and in the 1960s, they highlighted the treatment which they received from universities which, they argued, resulted from this exclusion. For example, in 1967 the President of the Guild of students at Birmingham University was given a sabbatical year. Students at the University noted that this had taken place

twenty years after the it was first raised as an issue by students.<sup>22</sup> In 1966, Bill Savage, the President of the N.U.S. at the time, suggested that

the concept of the student as being a member of an adult academic community is, in many cases, meaningless in practice. Every week examples are reported to the National Union of Students of petty interference with the activities of the student body and decisions directly affecting students being taken without any consultation and of the arbitrary dismissal of students for “offences” which have nothing to do with academic performance.<sup>23</sup>

In the same year the President of the Guild at Liverpool University complained that ‘while students do not learn of decisions until they are made, basic mistakes...will continue to be made’.<sup>24</sup> These issues will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Yet such accusations, particularly of interference with the activities of students, were not new. For example, in 1933 the Oxford Union passed a motion ‘that this house will in no circumstances fight for its King and Country’, and although this motion was subsequently debated by students at numerous universities and colleges throughout the country, the authorities at University College Nottingham and Sheffield University intervened to prevent debates on it from taking place.<sup>25</sup> At Cambridge University in 1932 the President of the Union was ‘advised’ by the Senior Proctor to cancel a debate on the motion ‘that the sexual morality of Christian Civilisation is unscientific and harmful’. A letter in the *New Statesman and Nation* in December 1933 alleged that ‘the President then raised the question of freedom of thought and speech, and pointed out that this

amounted to a destruction of both. “Not at all” replied the Senior Proctor, “it is to protect your freedom of speech that we are asking you to drop this debate”!<sup>26</sup> The actions of the Senior Proctor went unchallenged, but at this time students were beginning to become involved in political activism which resulted in direct confrontation with university authorities, though in the 1930s students demanded better consultation rather than active representation. Prior to the 1930s, most students appear to have been conservative in outlook. In 1926, for example, most students acted as strike-breakers during the General Strike: nearly two thousand Oxford University students volunteered to work as ‘dockers, busmen, or special constables in London and the provincial cities’ in the place of striking workers.<sup>27</sup>

By the 1930s, however, this situation had changed, and students had begun to become involved in more radical political activity, particularly over issues such as anti-fascism and pacifism (which were often related) and these activities sometimes provoked conflict with university authorities.<sup>28</sup> For example, in January 1934, the Student Anti-War Council outlined, in a letter to the University of London Union, ‘some of the ways in which the freedom of speech and action of students have been suppressed in London during the last term’, and added that ‘we think it is quite clear that the general policy of the authorities of the University of London directly conflicts with student freedom’.<sup>29</sup> The authors of the letter allege that at University College, London, the Provost had refused to recognise the Anti-War Committee, and that he prevented its members ‘from distributing leaflets outside the college’. He refused a request for a consultation with a deputation by the whole group, and eventually only talked with two of them. Examples of clashes between students and authorities at Imperial College

and Regent Street Polytechnic are also included in the letter. While it is difficult to assess the accuracy of the letter, and the extent to which the motives of its authors distorted the representation of the facts, the letter does make it clear that some students did object to the attitudes and behaviour of some university authorities. Moreover, its discussion of events at Oxford University is corroborated by the press, where a debate on the banning of the Labour and October (Communist) Clubs took place.<sup>30</sup> This ban occurred after the Anti-War Council had urged students not to join the Officer Training Corps (O.T.C.) at the University. The ban meant that 'not only might no criticism of the O.T.C. be made in a public meeting, but even an open letter to all students on this question could not be allowed. A Free Speech meeting would be banned. This meeting being held, penalties were inflicted on those attending'. The subsequent struggle between the students and the university authorities included the submission of a petition of 1,000 names to the proctors, and eventually resulted in the rescinding of the disciplinary measures.

These challenges to university authorities were, however, limited in scope and number, and the period during which such challenges took place was short. During the 1940s and 1950s student activism aimed at improving students' position within university government was limited. When it did take place, such as the boycott of the refectory at Leicester University in 1958 in protest at the lack of consultation over price increases, such protest was small in scale, and still aimed at improved consultation.<sup>31</sup> Commentators were therefore surprised when, in the late 1960s, students engaged in protest about university government and wider political issues. In April 1968 an article in the *Spectator* which referred to

a protest against 'a Minister of the Crown' at Oxford University, argued that 'no such thing could have possibly occurred...twenty years ago...first, because very few of us cared enough about politics; secondly, because we would have regarded such behaviour as a breach of hospitality; thirdly, because we were disposed to be courteous to our elders, even when we despised them; and finally, because in any case at all we should have had more amusing and profitable things to do'.<sup>32</sup> Whether this was an accurate portrayal of the attitudes of students in the 1940s and 1950s is, of course, debatable. Nonetheless, the relative lack of student activism in that period prompted the *Guardian*, in March 1968, to ask, after a sit-in had taken place at Essex University, 'are students a different breed from the tweed-jacketed conformists of 10 years ago...?'.<sup>33</sup>

The policy objectives of the main student body, the N.U.S., were also limited, and both reflected, and arguably contributed to, the lack of student political activism in the 1940s and 1950s. This body was founded in 1921 as a federation of the students' unions at each institution. These students' unions usually provided a social space and political forum (the Union General Meeting) for students, along with such facilities as political and sporting clubs. They had their own constitutions and their own elected officers, such as a president, treasurer, etc., who usually became the union's representatives in negotiations with universities. They were funded by the government via a grant which was given to the individual university or college and then passed on to the students' union. They affiliated themselves to the N.U.S., to which they contributed funds. The N.U.S. was originally established with the aim of improving relations between the students of different countries in the wake of the First World War.<sup>34</sup>

For the inter-war period its resources were therefore directed mainly to providing students with access to cheap travel opportunities. This restricted outlook with regard to the potential political strength of the N.U.S. was reflected in Clause 3 of its Constitution which stated that the objects of the N.U.S. were to

maintain and promote their co-operation with the students of other countries and to promote the educational, social and general interests of students and to all such other things which are incidental or conducive to the above objects or any of them. The objects shall be pursued in entire independence of all political and religious groups or propaganda. Matters which are essential to the full consideration of educational issues may be included in discussion but it shall not be the role of the National Union to provide a general forum.<sup>35</sup>

This Clause was not changed until 1969 so that the policy objectives of the N.U.S. remained restricted and its campaigning methods were confined to the use of negotiation with government without the 'leverage' of the threat of direct action. Although the N.U.S. collaborated with the A.U.T. in the late 1930s over the issue of the establishment of staff-student committees in universities, even this limited objective was replaced in 1947 by a four-point policy which requested 'the abolition of all fees, maintenance grants for all students, co-ordinated basic rates for all grants and a minimum entrance standard to universities and colleges'.<sup>36</sup> These issues dominated N.U.S. campaigns throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, so that in its memorandum to the Robbins Committee in June 1961 the N.U.S. named access to higher education

for all, and favourable educational conditions for students, as the two issues with which it was most concerned.<sup>37</sup>

It was not until the 1960s that frustration with the limited aims and successes of the N.U.S. on student issues such as grants and accommodation, the on-going failure of universities to consult with students when making decisions which affected them, as well as changes in the position of young people in society, led to calls from students for recognition as equal members of the academic community, with the representation which would accompany such a position. In 1969, Jack Straw, the President of the N.U.S., noted that 'it should never be forgotten that the same kind of demands which Vice Chancellors have recently conceded to were made many years ago by student union presidents'.<sup>38</sup> A year later, therefore, the President of Keele University Students' Union argued, after a long campaign for representation which included the use of direct action, that 'for years now, students have been getting more and more frustrated as request after request has failed. The concessions we have gained have been fought for [*sic*] such a period of time and with such toil that it hardly seemed worth it'.<sup>39</sup> This frustration led to calls for the use of direct action in order to gain representation in university government which was, by 1965, seen as the only way in which students would be able to gain an effective role in the decision making process in universities. Moreover, frustration with the consistent failure to make progress over student issues was accompanied by frustration with the campaign methods of the NUS and students' unions (see chapter 4). This led, in turn, to a challenge to the methods and policy objectives of the N.U.S.. These issues will be discussed further in the next chapter and in chapter 4.

Yet this desire for a position of equality and participation in the academic community also reflected changes in the attitudes of young people toward their position in society. This meant that by the 1960s many young people not only desired a place in democratic processes, both in university and parliamentary government, but that in the case of universities, they were willing to challenge university authorities in order to attain that position of equality. This will be discussed further below, as well as in greater detail in Chapter 5.

These changes in the attitudes of young people toward their position in society, particularly in relation to authority, seem to have begun in the 1950s. Although the above discussion may give the impression that students did not take part in protest in the 1950s, they do appear to have engaged in limited protest on a number of issues in which the values of older generations were questioned. The issues which prompted these protests were particularly those which were of an international nature, so that in November and December 1956, for example, students across the country protested about the Soviet invasion of Hungary, and the Suez crisis.<sup>40</sup> In 1958 the N.U.S. organised a rally and demonstration in London against apartheid in South Africa which was attended by 8 - 10,000 students.<sup>41</sup> Such protests were few in number and frequency, however, and it is difficult to provide more than a handful of examples.

Instead, it was the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (C.N.D.) which attracted most support from students in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. C.N.D. was formed in February 1958 in the wake of British atom bomb tests and the announcement of Soviet I.C.B.M. (inter-continental ballistic missile) capability in 1957.<sup>42</sup> It received strong support from young people from the start,



so that in 1958 a Youth C.N.D. (Y.C.N.D.) and Colleges and Universities C.N.D. (C.U.C.N.D.) were created. According to Peggy Duff, the campaign secretary, these two sections became 'the largest and most dominant', while the C.N.D. societies which were formed at almost every university 'were soon the biggest political societies'.<sup>43</sup> In 1958, for example, 60 per cent of students at Leicester University supported a referendum which suggested that 'Britain should take a moral lead in nuclear disarmament', while in 1959, in a random survey of 630 students at University College Cardiff, 527 students said that they felt that Britain should press for agreement on nuclear weapons, though only 309 supported unilateral disarmament by Britain.<sup>44</sup> Indeed C.N.D. has been described, albeit from the biased perspective of an active C.N.D. member, John Slater, as 'the biggest political stimulus in the universities' in the 'late fifties and early sixties'.<sup>45</sup> With its commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain, it received an idealistic response from students: one Leicester University student wrote in 1958 that 'at last students have broken out from what appeared to be apathy. They have realised that this issue has gone beyond the bounds of politics. Politics cease to matter; in fact, they seem impotent, for what is at stake is Humanity'.<sup>46</sup> Not only did students take part in demonstrations which were organised by C.U.C.N.D. and the national C.N.D., but they also took part in demonstrations organised by the Committee of 100.<sup>47</sup> University C.N.D. societies also organised demonstrations. At University College Cardiff, for example, 'the college branch of the Nuclear Disarmament Campaign organised a protest march through the centre of Cardiff' in January 1959, while in December 1961 the Committee of 100 held a sit-down demonstration in the city centre in

which 200 of the 700 demonstrators were students from the University.<sup>48</sup> At the Aldermaston march of 1959 (the march at Easter from London to Aldermaston, or vice versa, was the largest annual C.N.D. demonstration, which was begun in 1958) a survey which took a 10 per cent sample of the march found that 41 per cent of marchers were under 21, and that students represented the largest single occupational grouping within the march as a whole.<sup>49</sup>

Nonetheless, it is difficult to assess the importance of C.N.D. to the student movement of the late 1960s. It has been suggested, for example, that in the early 1960s C.N.D. provided a 'training ground' for many of the radical students of the late 1960s. This is the view taken by Ronald Fraser, while Richard Taylor has suggested that the C.N.D. student groups 'exercised considerable influence in the New Left and they produced many of the most creative thinkers and policy makers that were to emerge in C.N.D.s later years'.<sup>50</sup> Frank Parkin has argued that C.N.D. was a 'transmission belt into radical politics of a wider kind for some young people who otherwise would have held aloof'.<sup>51</sup> This may have been the case for some students, but it will be noted in chapters 3 and 4 that radical students who placed themselves on the far left were not representative of the majority of students who participated in protests in the 1960s. Moreover, by the late 1960s C.N.D. had declined as a political force, having reached the peak of its support in the first years of the decade: Richard Taylor places the peak at around 1961, with a slow, but accelerating decline thereafter. The transient nature of the student population in Britain, with degrees only usually lasting for three years, meant that C.N.D. was not the *direct* influence upon the student movement of the late 1960s that it might have been

had it reached the peak of its support in (for the sake of speculation) 1968, instead of 1961. It did become involved in the anti-Vietnam War Campaign (see next chapter) after 1965, and a survey of the 100,000 strong anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London on 27 October 1968 found that 37 per cent of the people attending who were under the age of 24 had belonged to, or actively supported C.N.D.. It was noted, however, that 'more of the over-24s, inevitably, were C.N.D. supporters because C.N.D. is now moribund'.<sup>52</sup> A Gallup Poll survey on student protest which was carried out at Sussex and Cambridge Universities in May 1968 also found that 10 per cent of students had taken part in a protest by C.N.D., or some other form of protest against nuclear weapons, within 'the past two or three years', though this was second only to protests against the Vietnam War, which 17 per cent of students had attended.<sup>53</sup> C.N.D. may have been, then, a radicalising 'training ground' for some students, but not for the majority of those students who took part in protests in the late 1960s. Indeed, while the American historian Meredith Veldman has noted that 'CND was more than a protest against nuclear weapons; it embraced a social and cultural critique of the whole of technological civilisation', and that this critique was profoundly anti-technology and anti-materialist, such a critique does not seem to have informed the motives of the majority of those students who protested in the late 1960s, though it appears to have done so among those students on the far left (see chapter 4).<sup>54</sup>

It appears, however, that the most significant influence of C.N.D. upon the student movement of the late 1960s was the example provided by the use of protest in order to challenge established authority and policy. It is worthwhile

quoting the argument suggested by Richard Taylor at length since it provides a valuable summary of this possible influence. Taylor argues that C.N.D. and the peace movement of the 1950s and early 1960s

was part of a process that broke the post-war consensus and took politics and political concerns outside the exclusive confines of Westminster and the professional politicians. For the first time since the 1930s a mass extra-parliamentary movement emerged onto the political scene. And the rapidity of that growth, the size of the Movement, and the intensity of feeling on the issues involved was something quite new. This whole ethos of involvement and concern - and of ordinary people's *right* to be heard on centrally important issues - has been a continuing theme in British politics (and indeed in Western politics generally) ever since. In particular, the concepts and practices of NVDA [non-violent direct action], whilst not widely adopted in their 'pure' forms, have become almost commonplace techniques of protest in campaigns ranging from the parochial to the international.<sup>55</sup>

He goes on to argue, furthermore, that 'the youthful radicalism...was an important part of the Movement. And it was the first time in post-war Britain that a new generation had rejected the politics and questioned the morality of its elders'.<sup>56</sup> Students of the late 1960s followed on from this example of the use of protest while campaigning for a place in university governments, as well as during campaigns aimed at changing the policy of the parliamentary government, such as policy on the Vietnam War. The change in the attitudes toward authority among young people will, as has already been suggested, be discussed further in Chapter 5, but the examination of the use of protest by students from 1965 will be continued in the next chapter. While frustration with the campaign methods of

the N.U.S. and the ongoing arbitrary treatment of students by universities prompted calls for the use of direct action after 1965, this would not have been carried through into real protest without the change in attitudes to authority which have been outlined above and which will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> The six ancient universities were Oxford (founded c. 1167, though this is an approximation at best), Cambridge (c. 1229), St. Andrews (1412), Glasgow (1451), Aberdeen (1494), and Edinburgh (1583). Those founded in the nineteenth century were London (1826), Durham (1832), and Manchester (1880). The twentieth century foundations included Birmingham (1900), Liverpool (1903), Leeds (1904), Sheffield (1905), Bristol (1909), Reading (1926), Nottingham (1948), Southampton (1952), Hull (1954), Exeter (1955), and Leicester (1957).

<sup>2</sup> See University Grants Committee, *University Development, Interim Report on the years 1957 to 1961*, presented April 1962, Cmnd. 1691, p. 7, for details of the plans for the creation of these universities.

<sup>3</sup> See *Grants to students, Report of the Committee appointed by the Minister of Education and the Secretary of State for Scotland in June 1958, under the Chairmanship of Sir Colin Anderson*, presented May 1960, Cmnd. 1051, pp. 1-3 and 10-17. See appendix 1, table 3 for grant figures.

<sup>4</sup> *Higher Education, Report of the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins 1961-1963*, presented October 1963, Cmnd. 2154, Parliamentary Papers xi-xiv 1962-63. See also John Carswell, *Government and the Universities in Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 1985) for a discussion of the membership of the Committee, its deliberations, and its findings.

<sup>5</sup> *Higher Education*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>6</sup> See *Education Act 1944*, 7 & 8 Geo 6, Chapter 31, 3 August 1944, p. 5, which states that education should be aimed at the 'ages, abilities and aptitudes' of different children. See also Peter Gosden, *The Education System Since 1944* (Martin Robertson, 1983), p. 1. Gosden argues that the Act's measures to make sure that 'every child would go to secondary school' was 'perhaps the main achievement' of the Act.

<sup>7</sup> *Higher Education, ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>8</sup> *Higher Education, ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> See also John Layard, John King and Claus Moser, *The Impact of Robbins* (Penguin, 1969) and Richard Layard and John King, 'Expansion since Robbins', in David Martin (ed), *Anarchy and*

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*Culture: The Problem of the Contemporary University* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 13-36.

<sup>10</sup> University Grants Committee, *Returns from Universities and University Colleges in Receipt of Treasury Grant, Academic Year 1960-61*, presented November 1962, Cmnd. 1855, table 1, p. 12. See also University Grants Committee, *Statistics of Education, Universities, 1970*, vol. 6 (H.M.S.O., 1973), table 6, p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> By November 1969 only eight polytechnics had been designated. These were the polytechnics of Bristol, Hatfield, City of Leicester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Sunderland, and Wolverhampton. These were followed in 1970 by Brighton, Huddersfield, Lanchester, Leeds, Liverpool, City of London, North East London, Central London, South Bank, Thames, Kingston, Manchester, North Staffordshire, Oxford, Plymouth, Teeside, Trent, and Glamorgan. In 1971 City of Birmingham, Middlesex, and Preston were designated, and North London Polytechnic was designated in 1973.

<sup>12</sup> See *University Development from 1935 to 1947, Being the Report of the University Grants Committee* (H.M.S.O., 1948), appendix IIIa, p. 89. See also University Grants Committee, *University Development, Interim Report on the years 1957 to 1961*, Cmnd. 1691, presented 1962, table x, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> University Grants Committee, *University Development 1962-1967*, presented November 1968, Cmnd. 3829, table 19, p. 38.

<sup>14</sup> *Higher Education*, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> University Grants Committee, *Annual Survey, Academic Year 1968-69*, presented January 1970, Cmnd. 4261, pp. 37-38. See pp. 36-40 for a description of the role of the U.G.C..

<sup>16</sup> For a description of the evolution of university government in British universities see Sir Eric Ashby, *Universities: British, Indian, African* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), pp. 296-309. See also Graeme C. Moodie and Rowland Eustace, *Power and Authority in British Universities* (Allen and Unwin, 1974), pp. 25-44, and Graeme C. Moodie, 'University Government', in H. J. Butcher and E. Rudd (eds), *Contemporary Problems in Higher Education* (McGraw-Hill, 1972).

<sup>17</sup> *Higher Education*, p. 219.

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<sup>18</sup> Association of University Teachers, *University Government and Organisation*, January 1965, M.R.C., MSS 280, N.U.S. archive, box 137/MI, file 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Higher Education*, p. 219.

<sup>20</sup> National Union of Students, *Student Participation in College Government*, October 1966, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 129.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted by Jack Straw in his *Granada Guildhall Lecture*, 'Student Participation in Higher Education: "Education for Democracy and Technology"', 6 October 1969, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 138/MI, file 6, p. 9. Straw was President of the N.U.S. at the time.

<sup>22</sup> *Redbrick*, 1 March 1967, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> National Union of Students, *Student Participation*.

<sup>24</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 8 February 1966, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> See the paper entitled "'Oxford" Resolution. Results from the Universities', M.R.C., MSS 280, box 53/KC, file 1, which provides a list of the institutions where the motion was debated and, in most cases, gives details of the votes, which were all in favour of the motion or variations upon it. This box contains extensive material relating to the 'King and Country' issue.

<sup>26</sup> *New Statesman and Nation*, 23 December 1933.

<sup>27</sup> See A. H. Halsey and Stephen Marks, 'British student politics', *Daedalus*, vol. 97, 1 (Winter 1968), p. 121.

<sup>28</sup> See M.R.C., MSS 280, box 53/KC for details of student involvement in pacifist and anti-fascist campaigns, including press cuttings which give details of protests, and pamphlets produced by student groups.

<sup>29</sup> See letter dated 7 January 1934, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 53/KC, file 5.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, cuttings from *New Statesman and Nation*, 11 November 1933, the *Manchester Guardian*, 15 November 1933, and the *Evening Standard*, 28 November 1933, among others, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 53/KC, file 6. See also Ashby and Anderson, *The Rise of the Student Estate* (MacMillan, 1970), pp. 83-87 for a discussion of other arbitrary actions by universities and colleges, including the L.S.E., Reading University, and University College, Aberystwyth.



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<sup>31</sup> *Ripple*, 28 February 1958, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Spectator*, 19 April 1968, p. 521.

<sup>33</sup> *Guardian*, 7 March 1968, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> See Ashby and Anderson, *Rise*, pp. 61-90 for a description of the formation and early years of the N.U.S..

<sup>35</sup> *NUS Yearbook 1969*, p. 69, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 145/MI, file 3.

<sup>36</sup> National Union of Students, *Twenty Years of NUS: 1922 - 1943*, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 144/MI, file 8, and National Union of Students, *The First Forty Years, 1922 - 1962*, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 144/MI, file 7.

<sup>37</sup> *Memorandum to the Committee on Higher Education under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins, appointed by the Prime Minister, June 1961*, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 144/MI, file 4, p. 3. For the activities of the N.U.S. in the 1950s see *NUS Yearbooks*, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 145/MI, file 7. These make it clear that the N.U.S. had limited objectives throughout the decade. See also Ashby and Anderson, *Rise*, pp. 90-108.

<sup>38</sup> Jack Straw, *Granada Guildhall Lecture*.

<sup>39</sup> *Concourse*, 15 May 1970, p. 3. See Ashby and Anderson, *Rise*, pp. 1-60 for examples of the struggle for student representation throughout the nineteenth century.

<sup>40</sup> See *The Times*, 8 November 1956, p. 8; 9 November 1956, p. 5; 12 November 1956, p. 4 for details of demonstrations on the Soviet invasion of Hungary. See *Broadsheet*, 5 December 1956, p. 1, and p. 3, for details of demonstration on Hungary and Suez.

<sup>41</sup> *NUS Yearbook 1960*, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 146.

<sup>42</sup> The definitive and exhaustive account of the early years of C.N.D. is Richard Taylor, *Against the Bomb: the British Peace Movement 1958-1965* (Oxford University Press, 1988). Other useful accounts are C. Driver, *The Disarmers* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), John Minnion and Philip Bolsover (eds), *The CND Story: The First 25 Years of CND In The Words Of The People Involved* (Allison and Busby, 1983), Paul Mercer, *'Peace' of the Dead: The Truth Behind the Nuclear Disarmers* (Policy Research Publications, 1986), James Hinton, *Protests and Visions*

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(Hutchison Radius, 1989) and Peggy Duff, *Left, Left, Left* (Allison and Busby, 1971), pp. 113-257.

<sup>43</sup> Duff, *Left*, p. 160.

<sup>44</sup> *Ripple*, 24 March 1958, p. 1; *Broadsheet*, 29 January 1959, p. 1. See also the survey of students at Aberdeen, Leicester, Nottingham and St. Andrews Universities, Kings College Durham, University College Cardiff, and North Staffordshire College which was carried out by C.N.D. in November and December 1960. See C.N.D. archive, B.L.P.E.S., box 9/2. This archive contains extensive information on both Y.C.N.D. and C.U.C.N.D.. Further C.N.D. archive material is held at the M.R.C., MSS 181, including a complete run of *Sanity*, the C.N.D. newspaper.

<sup>45</sup> Duff, *Left*, p. 161.

<sup>46</sup> *Ripple*, 24 March 1958, p.1.

<sup>47</sup> The Committee of 100 had its origins in the Direct Action Committee (D.A.C.) which was established in 1957 by Bertrand Russell with the aim of using civil disobedience in protests against nuclear proliferation. The D.A.C. was incorporated into C.N.D. in 1958, but disagreements over the use of civil disobedience led to a split in 1960, when the Committee of 100 was formed. Links and co-operation between the two organisations continued, but were strained. See Taylor, *Against the Bomb*, for a detailed discussion. See also Bertrand Russell, *Autobiography* (3 vols., George Allen and Unwin, 1969), vol. III, 1944-1967.

<sup>48</sup> *Broadsheet*, 29 January 1959, p. 1 and 18 January 1962, p. 5.

<sup>49</sup> Driver, *Disarmers*, pp. 59-60. For studies of the membership of C.N.D. see Frank Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism* (Manchester University Press, 1968), and John Mattausch, *A Commitment to Campaign: a Sociological Study of CND* (Manchester University Press, 1989).

<sup>50</sup> See Ronald Fraser, *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt* (Chatto and Windus, 1988), pp. 30-32, and Taylor, *Against the Bomb*, p. 32.

<sup>51</sup> Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism*, p. 163.

<sup>52</sup> *New Society*, 31 October 1969, pp. 631-634.

<sup>53</sup> Gallup Poll, *Student Demonstrations*, May 1968, question 4.

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<sup>54</sup> Meredith Veldman, *Fantasy, the Bomb, and the Greening of Britain: Romantic protest 1945-1980* (Cambridge University press, 1994), p. 115. See pp. 115-204 for a discussion of C.N.D..

<sup>55</sup> Taylor, *Against the Bomb*, p. 340.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

## CHAPTER 2

### STUDENT PROTEST FROM 1965 TO 1972

In contrast to the period before 1965, student protest became a regular occurrence after that date, reaching a peak in 1968. This chapter will provide an outline of the development of that protest, and will endeavour to demonstrate the ways in which protests were used by students to challenge those in positions of authority and to change the relationship between students and those in authority. The account in this chapter is not completely comprehensive, of course. Rather than providing exhaustive detail of every protest which was carried out by students, it will provide a descriptions of both large and small protests of various types. It will also provide the reader with a basic understanding of the trends in the evolution of the student movement. The reader is referred to the chronology which has been inserted at the end of this thesis.

It will be argued consistently throughout this work that student protests were prompted when students perceived that an injustice had been committed and they felt sufficiently strongly about the issue concerned to proclaim this opposition in public. More particularly, student protest in the 1960s was the result of transgressions of student notions of 'justice' and the ways in which university authorities, governments, or members of society should behave. When such transgressions took place, students challenged the decisions of those in authority, and by so doing, they laid claim to that authority and played a role in government. Whether their protests were effective or not, they were still able to gain a voice in decision making processes, and very often this protest was aimed at providing them with a permanent and formalised place in government. This was particularly the case with sit-ins, when students claimed an equal place in the academic community as a right, and attempted to prevent the arbitrary treatment

by universities which they had previously suffered and which often prompted protests in the 1960s. For the first time students used forceful methods to claim a place in the academic community and to play a role in the policy decisions of both university and national governments. Yet while students took part in protests in the 1960s, they were not regular occurrences before that time. The difference in the 1960s was that for the first time students felt that they had a right to be heard as equals with adults, and that their opinions mattered and should be taken into account. Therefore, not only did protest represent a challenge to the opinions of those in authority, but it represented a change in the position of young people in society, and of the relationship of young people with those in authority, from one of subservience to one of critical equality. This will be highlighted in the examples of student protest discussed in this chapter.

The first issue which prompted students to engage in protest on a regular basis was the American military intervention in Vietnam. Although there was a development toward the use of protests on campuses from 1965 onward, culminating in its use at the end of 1966, it was protest away from campuses in which students began to participate regularly from 1965, notably over the Vietnam War. This is not to suggest that students had not engaged in protest, both on and off campuses, before 1965. The examination of student involvement in C.N.D. which took place in the last chapter indicated that they did take part in protest before that date, though support for C.N.D. declined after 1961. Other sporadic protests took place in subsequent years, such as a torchlit march through London by 6,000 students in November 1964 in protest against apartheid in South Africa.<sup>1</sup> Yet it was not until 1969 that large numbers of students regularly

participated in protest against apartheid, while demonstrations on other issues, such as those against the declaration of independence by the white supremacist government of Rhodesia in November 1965, or against Enoch Powell after his 'rivers of blood' speech in April 1968, were sporadic.<sup>2</sup> Instead, it was the campaign against the Vietnam War which was the first to be supported consistently by students in ever increasing numbers from 1965 onward, reaching a peak of support in late 1968. More students protested, and more protests took place against the Vietnam War than on any other issue in the late 1960s. It would seem appropriate, then, to begin an account of the development of student protest in the 1960s with an examination of the growth of the anti-Vietnam War campaign from 1965 onward. Moreover, this account will be the first detailed outline of the anti-Vietnam War campaign in Britain which has ever been written, and in the discussions which will take place in subsequent chapters it will help in challenging many of the assumptions which have been made about the student movement. It will also provide a number of valuable examples of the ways in which student protest represented a challenge to authority.

An understanding of the origins of the Vietnam War will help in assessing the challenge to authority which student protest on Vietnam represented. This will also aid an understanding of the aims of the various groups who protested against the Vietnam War. Brief details of the development of the War itself are provided in the chronology at the end of this thesis, and a discussion of a number of the factors which contributed to making the war so emotive will be discussed in chapter 6. It is possible to find many of the causes of the war in the nineteenth century, but for the purposes of this chapter it is

necessary to look only as far as the Geneva Agreements of 1954.<sup>3</sup> These were reached after the defeat of the French colonial regime in Vietnam (which was then known as Indochina) by communist forces under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. The agreements created a temporary division of Vietnam along a demilitarized zone (D.M.Z.) at the 17th parallel, into North (communist) and South Vietnam. The troops of both sides were to withdraw to their respective sides of the D.M.Z. so that the peace which was necessary to the holding of democratic elections in 1956 could be achieved. The likelihood of a communist victory in such elections, however, prompted the American government to support the refusal of the South Vietnamese government to hold the elections, and to claim independence from the North. The Geneva Agreements were therefore never implemented, and instead America provided financial and military support to successive corrupt and oppressive regimes in the South. In 1960, when it had become clear that the Geneva Agreements would not be implemented, Ho Chi Minh established the National Liberation Front (N.L.F.), which was also known as the Viet Cong (V.C.), which used military insurgency in South Vietnam to take effective control of large areas of the country and to destabilise the South Vietnamese regime, with the ultimate goal of 'liberating' the South and uniting Vietnam. By 1965 the conflict in the South had escalated, so that when the Americans became involved in direct military intervention in March 1965 with the aim of defeating the communist threat to the South, Vietnam was already engulfed in a large and bloody civil war. The British government, under the Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson, followed a policy of support for the American military intervention, while attempting to promote



peace negotiations between the two sides. The protests by British students against the war therefore took the form of direct opposition to the policy of the British government, though the details of this opposition differed between groups.

Indeed, the campaign against the war was not united in its aims, and it did not come under the direction of any central organisation. Instead, a number of national and local organisations organised a variety of protests with widely differing aims. The British Council for Peace in Vietnam (B.C.P.V.) and the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (V.S.C.) are representative of the two main stances which were taken by protesters against the war. If the anti-Vietnam War campaign was a challenge to authority in the form of a direct confrontation with government over its policy and stated objectives, then it will be necessary to understand the ways in which government was perceived to have taken wrong decisions, and the ways in which protesters against the Vietnam War wanted government policy, whether British or American, to change. It would therefore seem appropriate to examine the details of the aims of the B.C.P.V. and the V.S.C.

The B.C.P.V. was the largest organisation within the anti-Vietnam War campaign to represent the pacifist line. It was founded in May 1965 and was sponsored by a wide variety of organisations, including C.N.D., Y.C.N.D., C.U.C.N.D., the Committee of 100, church groups, and trade unions, among others.<sup>4</sup> The sponsorship of these various groups is notable in indicating that students were not the only group to take part in protests against the War: in 1965 students did not represent the majority of those engaged in anti-Vietnam War

protests, though they do seem to have gained such a majority by 1968 (see below).<sup>5</sup> In its *Declaration* the B.C.P.V. argued that 'the war in Vietnam is a crime against humanity which challenges the conscience of the world. Weapons of destruction are being used more barbarous, short of the bomb, than known in human record. The people of Britain and the peoples of the world, already awakening to awareness, must be stirred and mobilised into action'.<sup>6</sup> The campaigns of the organisation were aimed at the implementation of the 1954 Geneva Agreements as the best means of ending the conflict. In order to do this it proposed the cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam by the United States, the withdrawal of American and allied (Australian, New Zealand, and South Korean) forces, and the creation of a negotiated peace settlement at which the N.L.F. would be represented, with the aim of restoring 'full self determination for the people of Vietnam'. Further to this the B.C.P.V. requested the withdrawal of the support for the American intervention in Vietnam which Harold Wilson's government had given to the American President, Lyndon B. Johnson. While its protests therefore took the form of opposition to the decisions of the British and American governments, and the proposal of alternative courses of action, the demonstrations which were organised by the B.C.P.V were peaceful and non-violent in nature and intent. For example, they organised a peaceful Human Rights Day demonstration in London in December 1966, though they did take part in demonstrations which were organised by other groups, such as the V.S.C. demonstration in London in July 1967.<sup>7</sup>

The V.S.C. however, took a very different view from the B.C.P.V. as to the best solution to the war in Vietnam. The V.S.C. was created in June 1966 by, among others, Bertrand Russell, who stated that

we concluded, after careful examination of the great body of facts that we had amassed, that the war must be ended quickly and that the only way to end it was to support the North Vietnamese and the Liberation Front unequivocally. Moreover, we feared that so long as the war continued it would be used by America as an excuse for escalation which was likely to end in a general conflagration. We set up the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, which brought together those groups which saw the Vietnam War as flagrant aggression by the world's mightiest nation against a small peasant people. Supporters of the campaign held that justice demanded that they support the Vietnamese entirely.<sup>8</sup>

This, and the V.S.C. publicity, which stated 'US Imperialism: Stop bombing the North, get out of South Vietnam! Victory to the NLF! Long Live Ho Chi Minh!' was very different to the pacifist, though implicitly pro-N.L.F. stance of the B.C.P.V.<sup>9</sup> The V.S.C. identified itself as 'a movement committed to the victory of the Vietnamese people against the war of aggression and atrocity waged by the United States. We regard the struggle of the people of Vietnam as heroic and just. We intend to work in all ways available to us in their support. We will campaign strenuously against the British Government's complicity in the Vietnam War'. It also declared 'complete solidarity with the National Liberation Front and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in their resistance to American Imperialism' and argued that 'the negotiations proposed by Johnson and Wilson are fraudulent - words of peace to mask aggressive acts of war. We reject them

contemptuously'.<sup>10</sup> The stances taken by both the B.C.P.V. and the V.S.C. may have entailed challenges to the authority of the British government, therefore, but that of V.S.C. took a much more militant line, and entailed the outright rejection of the policy of the British government. Far from being pacifist, it supported the continuation of the war in the hope of a North Vietnamese victory. Moreover, the explicit rejection of imperialism played a greater role within the V.S.C. Indeed, the authority of the imperial powers of European countries had been challenged throughout the 1950s and 1960s by Asian and African countries, and it is perhaps not a coincidence that many of the protests which students took part in, such as those over South Africa and Rhodesia, were also linked to imperialism and its legacy in undermining the moral stance of those in authority. Moreover, those leaders who challenged the European imperial powers, such as Ho Chi Minh and Che Guevara, and writers such as Franz Fanon, were suggested, by the left, as examples of the ways in which those in authority in Europe could be challenged. It is notable, then, that V.S.C. was dominated by far left groups such as International Socialism (I.S.) and the International Marxist Group (I.M.G), and received support from the I.M.G. newspaper *Black Dwarf* (see chapter 5). These groups appear to have sought to use the V.S.C. campaign as a vehicle to attack Wilson and to undermine the authority of the Labour government in particular, and of parliamentary government in general. Demonstrations by V.S.C. usually entailed more violence and clashes with police than those by other organisations: by challenging the authority of the police they challenged the authority of the state. Claims of police brutality, whether founded in truth or not, also added to

the challenge to authority by discrediting the moral stance which those in authority could otherwise claim.

Yet violent clashes with police, and therefore with the representatives of the state and established authority, took place during demonstrations against the Vietnam War before the creation of V.S.C., and after its creation they occurred in demonstrations both by V.S.C. and other organisations. In December 1965, for example, a demonstration in Manchester which was organised by the Manchester University Peace in Vietnam Committee was attended by 200 students and ended in clashes with police which resulted in 11 arrests.<sup>11</sup> The V.S.C. demonstration in London on 2 July 1967 was attended by 5,000 people, including members of the B.C.P.V., and was described by V.S.C. as 'the largest Vietnam protest in this country so far'. During skirmishes with police 31 protesters were arrested.<sup>12</sup> At the V.S.C. demonstration in London on 22 October 1967, which was attended by 4-8,000 people, clashes with police took place which resulted in 47 arrests and accusations of police brutality by protesters.<sup>13</sup> By that time the V.S.C. appears to have been in the ascendancy within the anti-Vietnam War campaign as the organisation which was able to attract the largest numbers of people to its demonstrations, and by that time most of these people were students.

These violent demonstrations continued to grow in size in 1968, when the anti-Vietnam War campaign reached the peak of its support. The first of these demonstrations in 1968 took place in Sheffield on 26 January, when 2,000 protesters demonstrated outside the Town Hall during a visit by Harold Wilson.<sup>14</sup> During the demonstration violence broke out between police and demonstrators, and 23 people were arrested. The arrest of two people for 'jumping into the

gardens of the Grand Hotel carrying a burning American flag' provides a particularly striking example both of the strength of feeling which the War prompted, and the nature of the rejection of norms of behaviour and respect for authority which many student demonstrations represented. Indeed, the following month another example of such a rejection took place at Sussex University when a press liaison officer from the American Embassy was splashed with symbolic red paint as he left a teach-in on Vietnam.<sup>15</sup> At the same University, on 7 March 1968, an American flag was burned during an anti-Vietnam War demonstration by 500 students.<sup>16</sup>

Shortly after this, on Sunday 17 March, the largest and most violent anti-Vietnam War demonstration to take place up to that date was held outside the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square in London. Estimates of the numbers of protesters involved in the demonstration range from 10,000 by the *Guardian* and *New Society*, to 25,000 by *Guild Gazette*, to 25-35,000 by V.S.C., and 80,000 by the *Sun*.<sup>17</sup> A figure of between 10 and 20,000 protesters seems to be realistic.<sup>18</sup> Reports of the violence which took place at the demonstration appear to agree with the *Guardian*'s account of 'an estimated 300 arrests; 36 people were injured, and 50, including 25 policemen, one with a serious spine injury, were taken to hospital. Demonstrators engaged police - mounted and on foot - in a protracted battle throwing stones, earth, firecrackers and smokebombs'.<sup>19</sup> The V.S.C. accused the police of brutality, though it also argued that it agreed with the *Morning Star*'s outlook, that the violence was 'due to the fact that "Mr. Wilson's refusal to dissociate from President Johnson's war is rousing people to fury"'.<sup>20</sup> The demonstration was the largest and most violent of the post-war

period up to that date. Its impact upon public opinion and the comments of the press will be discussed in chapter 6, but it will suffice to say here that the demonstration was the most extreme phenomenon in a new trend in the attitudes of the young toward authority. Jeremy Bulger, a journalist for *New Society* who took part in the demonstration, argued that

I believe that Sunday's "Solidarity with Vietnam" demonstration was something new, something that indicates the pattern of major protests we shall have in future - if such protests are permitted. In short, I think, things cannot be the same again after Sunday; that the time of the orderly peace-platform marches are gone.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, at a V.S.C. demonstration on 21 July 1968, protesters who were denied access to Grosvenor Square by the police turned their wrath upon the Hilton Hotel where hotel and car windows were smashed by demonstrators throwing 'bricks and stones'. They then moved to Hyde Park where clashes with police took place which *The Times* described as 'The Battle of Hyde Park Corner'. There were 48 arrests, while 23 police and 14 demonstrators were injured.<sup>22</sup>

The press predicted even greater violence during the anti-Vietnam War demonstration which was to take place in London on 27 October 1968 (see chapter 6 for the press coverage in the period before and after the demonstration). The demonstration was organised by an Ad Hoc Committee, including representatives of the V.S.C., the Young Communist League, the Young Liberals, the Stop-It Committee, C.N.D., I.S., I.M.G., and the Independent Labour Party. Before the demonstration, on 24 October, the L.S.E. was occupied

by students so that it could be used as a sanctuary and medical facility by marchers in the event of the predictions of violence proving to be correct.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, the October 27 Ad Hoc Committee argued that 'most of us are not willing to support acts of passive civil disobedience, or of terrorism. Individuals who may have such minority actions in mind are warned not to rely on the mass of the demonstrators for protection', and when the demonstration took place it was overwhelmingly peaceful.<sup>24</sup> Only 2-3,000 people broke away from the main body of the 100,000 strong march, and attempted to make their way to Grosvenor Square, which was not part of the planned route. When they were halted by police, violence followed, during which there were 43 arrests, 'about 50' demonstrators were injured, and 4 of the 6,000 police attending the march were injured.<sup>25</sup>

Yet the attitude to violence which was displayed by the October 27 Ad Hoc Committee appears to be indicative of the attitude of most students, including those who took part in demonstrations. For example, a Gallup Poll survey of students at Sussex and Cambridge Universities which was conducted in May 1968 found that only 5 per cent of students approved of violent demonstrations. A further 34 per cent disapproved of violent demonstrations but felt that they were unavoidable, while 54 per cent of students disapproved and felt that they were unnecessary.<sup>26</sup> Most protests were peaceful, even though they still maintained their opposition to American and British policy, and therefore attempted to challenge the policies of those in positions of governmental authority and tried to play a part in changing those policies. Unlike previous generations they appear to have felt that their opinions mattered, and protest was



one of the few methods available to them of publicising those opinions. Indeed, students utilised numerous peaceful methods of protesting and expressing their opposition to the War itself, and to the attitudes of the British and American governments towards it. On 16 June 1965, for example, the Oxford Union held the first teach-in to take place in Britain; the idea originated in America. This took the form of a debate in which the opinions of the British Foreign Secretary, Michael Stewart, and the American Ambassador to Vietnam, Henry Cabot Lodge, were challenged.<sup>27</sup> Teach-ins on Vietnam were also held at Liverpool University in June 1965 and October 1966.<sup>28</sup> In May 1967 a satellite television discussion took place between 17 British and European students, and Senator Robert Kennedy in New York, and Governor Ronald Reagan in Los Angeles. The students challenged the two American politicians on their views on Vietnam, and in the opinion of the *Manchester Independent*, this was 'a subject on which the Americans were soundly hammered'.<sup>29</sup> At the Angry Arts Week at the Roundhouse in London in June and July 1967, artists such as John Williams, Procul Harem, and George Melly protested 'against American policy in Vietnam and the British government's support of this policy'. The event was organised 'by a group mainly of Americans, mainly at [sic] London School of Economics and Oxford', and was sponsored by Jonathan Miller, Peter O'Toole, Vanessa Redgrave, Harold Pinter and Paul Scofield among others.<sup>30</sup> In January 1966 the Social Studies Department of Leeds University held a 'full-scale simulation of the Vietnam situation' which lasted for three days and which was attended by observers from the Canadian Peace Research Institute and the Institute of Defence Analysis in Washington.<sup>31</sup> At the same University, in May 1967, the

Peace in Vietnam and C.N.D. Societies borrowed an exhibition of photographs of 'American atrocities' from the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation which prompted reactions such as 'frightening' and 'simply horrible...the war should stop' from those who visited it.<sup>32</sup> The sit-in appears to have been used only once as a method of protest against the Vietnam War: at Manchester University, in February 1967, 30 students held a sit-in outside a meeting of the University's senate, in protest at research which was being carried out in the Chemistry department which they felt 'could help the American war effort in Vietnam'.<sup>33</sup> Other novel forms of protest included a 20 mile sponsored walk around the Birmingham outer ring road by 100 students in November 1967, a 72 hour fast by 600 students and 40 members of staff at Sussex University in March 1968, and a peace march and moratorium in Liverpool in November 1969 during which a coffin was placed at the foot of the memorial to the War Dead at Pier Head.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, demonstrations continued to be the most common form of protest on Vietnam throughout the 1960s. As has been suggested, they were usually aimed either at a specific individual, or against government policy and the war in general, and the former were usually protests against members of the British or American governments. For those who were protesting they represented the ability to make their opinions known to policy makers in a direct manner, and allowed for a vocal expression of opposition. They were therefore 'disrespectful' of their 'betters' in a way which would not have been possible for members of previous generations. For example, in May 1966 students demonstrated outside Leeds Town Hall against the conferment of an honorary degree upon the Foreign Secretary, Michael Stewart, because of his support for

the American intervention in Vietnam. Thirteen students were arrested for breaching the peace during the demonstration.<sup>35</sup> In July 1966, students at Sussex University held an anti-Vietnam War demonstration during the conferment of an honorary degree upon Harold Wilson, who was also the target of a demonstration at Bradford University in November 1966 during his instalment as Chancellor of the University.<sup>36</sup> A demonstration also took place at Leeds University in February 1967 during the visit of Walt W. Rostow, one of President Johnson's advisors on foreign affairs.<sup>37</sup>

The campaign against the Vietnam War was therefore the first to gain consistent support from students since C.N.D., and by 1968 it was able to claim significantly more support than C.N.D. had received at its height in the early 1960s. From its small beginnings in 1965 it had continued to attract ever increasing numbers of students and others to demonstrations, reaching a peak with the demonstration in London on 27 October 1968. Although that demonstration was the largest to be held in Britain up to that date, and despite claims that 'this is not the end. This is the beginning of the campaign', or that 'October 27 should not be seen as an end in itself but as the beginning of a new movement which will finally overwhelm those trying to destroy it', the anti-Vietnam War campaign had reached the high point of its support by late 1968.<sup>38</sup> Never again would opposition to the Vietnam War prompt so many people to take part in a demonstration. Indeed, the campaign entered a period of striking and rapid decline after the 27 October demonstration: only 4,000 people attended a V.S.C. demonstration in London on 16 March 1969.<sup>39</sup> By November 1969, even reports of the My Lai massacre could not prompt any more than 1,600

people, accompanied by 1,000 police, to take part in a demonstration in Grosvenor Square.<sup>40</sup> In the aftermath of Vietnamese successes during the Têt offensive of Spring 1968 (see chapter 6), and the announcement, in June 1969, of planned reductions in the numbers of American forces in Vietnam with a long-term view to complete withdrawal from Vietnam, the student movement re-directed its attention to other issues. These included protests against tours by South African cricket and rugby teams in 1969 and 1970, a sporadic protests on such issues as Biafra, anti-semitic policy in the Soviet Union, Bangladeshi independence, and Northern Ireland.<sup>41</sup>

Simultaneous to the growth of the anti-Vietnam War campaign had been the development of student protest on university campuses. Examples of demonstrations on campuses in connection with the anti-Vietnam War campaign have already been cited above, but most protest at Universities, which was usually in the form of sit-ins, appears to have been aimed at the reform of university government or university policy. Again, these protests illustrate the point that many students felt that their opinions mattered and that they had a right to a formal role in decision making. While students had campaigned for many years for consultation and then representation within the governmental structures of universities, as was noted in the last chapter, they had resorted to protest only very rarely as a means of achieving their aims. In the 1960s this changed, and students used more forceful methods of challenging the decisions of university authorities. As well as demanding representation as a right, moreover, students appear to have recognised that such representation was their best hope for preventing arbitrary treatment by universities, of the kind which was discussed in

the last chapter. This combined with the frustration which many students appear to have felt at the slow progress which had been made in gaining representation in previous years. After 1965, therefore, students appear to have been less willing to tolerate the arbitrary treatment which they seem to have perceived themselves as receiving from universities. When students felt that universities had transgressed moral boundaries they used protest to bear witness to their opposition, to force changes in decisions, and ultimately to attempt to gain changes in university government to allow for *representation which they felt* would prevent such transgressions from being repeated.

It is clear that both students and observers did perceive that shortcomings in university governments resulted in the treatment of students in ways which were interpreted as unjust or arbitrary, even after 1965. For example, in November 1966, students at Birmingham University complained that their Vice Chancellor had attempted to censor one of the Students' Guild newspapers after it had attempted to criticise the way in which the University ran its halls of residence.<sup>42</sup> A further example is provided by events at Glasgow University between July 1965 and February 1966. A disciplinary hearing, which did not include student representatives, convicted six students, and suspended them from the University, on charges which they had never been told, and therefore had never been given the opportunity to refute. The charges had been brought against them as a result of the harassment of a member of staff, and when the charges against the convicted students became known, it became clear that the University had not proven their guilt and that in one case a student had been found guilty of taking steps to investigate the harassment which 'were less than could be

reasonably required from him in the whole circumstances'. Not only did this prompt *New Society* to conclude that 'university procedure generally is archaic', but it resulted in accusations in the House of Commons by Tam Dalyell (MP for West Lothian), that there had been 'a squalid fixing operation', and that the Vice Chancellor of Glasgow University, Sir Charles Wilson, and the Clerk of the Senate, Professor C. J. Fordyce, had 'been allowed to manipulate the law administered by the university to save their own faces'.<sup>43</sup>

It should also be noted that many senior members of university staff appear to have felt that there was little need for student to be represented in university governments. In January 1966 the President of Manchester University Students' Union, Keith Flood, argued that 'it's the obvious thing to want to get a seat on the Council, the obvious request to make. Perhaps that way we might get a seat on all student affairs committees. That's all from lodgings to refectories. And also the academic committees'. Yet Sir William Mansfield Cooper, the Vice Chancellor, suggested that 'students are very unlikely to have anything to contribute to the efficient administration of the university by taking places on the University Council'.<sup>44</sup> A year later, in January 1967, Professor S. H. Tobias of Birmingham University appeared on the television programme, 'the National Stakes', along with George Martin, the President of the N.U.S. at the time. In a discussion on student representation in university government, Professor Tobias asked 'would it mean more student representatives on Senate?'. In response to a reply of 'yes' he argued that 'I do not think this would really help because Senate is not where the real power is. If somebody wants to attend in my place he's welcome to this'.<sup>45</sup> Sir Sydney Caine, the Director of the L.S.E. until 1967,

complained in 1969 that 'increasingly in the last generation standards have been weakened or eroded so much that it seems that no standards any longer exist', and that 'in internal university affairs' this had 'without question contributed to the breakdown of traditional acceptance of academic authority by students'.<sup>46</sup> While it may be possible to argue that students may have been mistaken in their belief that representation in university government would improve the treatment which they received from universities, these statements by senior members of university government indicate that many of them felt that young people did not have a right to be heard, that their opinions did not necessarily count during decision making, and that students should defer to the decisions of those who were in positions of authority. Students appear to have disagreed with this interpretation, and so engaged in acts of protest.

Calls for the use of direct action in order to gain representation in university governments resulted in the formation, in September 1966, of a Radical Student Alliance (R.S.A.), which aimed to remove 'the barriers to a full and democratic education' (see appendix 3 for the manifesto of the R.S.A.). Although its Council was constituted from representatives of Students' Unions from various universities, as well as members of political groups including the Union of Liberal Students, the National Association of Labour Student Organisations (N.A.L.S.O.), and the National Student Committee of the Communist Party, the R.S.A. was dominated by members of the last organisation, perhaps from the time of its creation.<sup>47</sup> As its manifesto makes clear, the R.S.A. aimed to improve student participation in university governments, with the use of direct action to achieve this aim if necessary. It

argued that 'lack of militancy and perspective have so far prevented organisations achieving these aims', and R.S.A. therefore campaigned for the reform of Clause 3 of the N.U.S. constitution (see last chapter) in order that political discussion and action could be carried out by the N.U.S.. The R.S.A. was therefore the first national student organisation which called for the use of acts of protest as a solution to the problem of slow progress in gaining student representation. Its impact, and that of the far left, upon the N.U.S., will be discussed in chapter 4. The impact of the R.S.A. on student participation in protest will be examined here, however.

This took the form of the mobilisation of student opposition to, and protest against, the decision to increase the fees of overseas students, which was announced by the government in December 1966. The increase in the fees was condemned by the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (C.V.C.P.) which 'said that the proposal would discriminate between students from home and those from abroad'.<sup>48</sup> The Vice Chancellor of Liverpool University described the government's decision as 'monstrous and inhuman', and the Vice Chancellor of Sheffield University also spoke in opposition to the increase.<sup>49</sup> The R.S.A.'s response was to launch a national campaign of protest against the increase; this was the first of its kind in British student history. It was begun with a demonstration in London on 3 February 1967 which was attended by 2-3,000 students from around the country. One Birmingham University student argued that 'there's been nothing like it since CND'.<sup>50</sup> An Aston University student who attended the demonstration noted 'the general feeling that the [the fees increase] was a blatantly discriminatory measure'.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps most significantly, however,



R.S.A. was able to organise the first ever national student protest when it held a National Day of Protest against the increase in fees on 22 February 1967. Boycotts of lectures and demonstrations by students took place in universities and cities throughout the country, including a demonstration in Leeds by 2,000 students which was over half a mile in length, and a march through Manchester by 3,000 students. At Birmingham University, 2,500 students held a protest rally at the University's Great Hall, and in London there were demonstrations and the handing into Downing Street of a 40,000 signature petition. Lectures were boycotted by 94-96 per cent of Manchester University students, and by 65 and 60 per cent of students at Leeds and York Universities respectively.<sup>52</sup> Yet although these protests represented the largest mobilisation of simultaneous national student protest up to that date, they were also the apogee of R.S.A.'s support. After its failed challenge to N.U.S. Clause 3 at the N.U.S. April Conference in 1967 it went into a rapid decline: by the summer of 1967 the campaign against the increase in overseas students' fees had failed. The R.S.A. ceased to exist in November 1968. It is difficult, however, to assess the role played by the R.S.A. in the debate on student representation. This can only be assessed within the context of R.S.A.'s challenge to the N.U.S. opposition to the use of direct action in campaigns on student issues, and this will be carried out in chapter 4. It is nonetheless important at this juncture to note the role played by R.S.A. in encouraging students to use protest in their campaigns for improved representation within university governments, particularly in the light of the subsequent adoption of such tactics by students within a short time of R.S.A.'s

creation. R.S.A. may therefore have reflected, and helped to prompt, the desire by students to use more forceful means for gaining representation.

It is notable, then, that the first use of the sit-in as a tactic of protest by students in an attempt to influence university policy and to gain improved representation, took place at the L.S.E. in parallel with the development of the R.S.A.. The sit-in at the L.S.E. in March 1967 marked the start of a sustained period of student protest, usually involving the use of the sit-in as a form of protest, in order to gain representation or to change university policy. As has already been suggested, these sit-ins represented an unprecedented challenge to the authority of universities, and exemplified a fundamental change in the position of young people in society with regard to that authority. The details of the sit-in at the L.S.E. will not be discussed here, because they have been given exhaustive attention in other studies, but examples of student protest on other campuses will be provided as illustrations of the ways in which attitudes to authority among the young changed during the 1960s.<sup>53</sup> They will also illustrate the moral nature of students' outrage, and the ways in which this prompted students to protest.

After the sit-in at the L.S.E. the next sit-in to take place was that at Aston University in January 1968, and this was the first in a succession of sit-ins at universities in 1968. It was noted above that 1968 was the high point of student involvement in protests on non-university issues such as the Vietnam War. It was also, moreover, the period during which more students took part in a greater number of sit-ins than at any other time in the 1960s. After the Aston University sit-in, for example, there were sit-ins at Leicester University in February 1968,

Essex in May 1968, Hull from May to June 1968, Leeds in June 1968, Birmingham from November to December 1968, and Bristol in December 1968. There was also an occupation of Hornsey College of Art from May to July 1968.<sup>54</sup> All of these sit-ins conform to similar patterns of development, although the details of the individual circumstances of each university do differ. For this reason, an exhaustive account of each sit-in will not be provided here, but rather a detailed examination of two of the sit-ins which took place in 1968, those at Leicester and Birmingham, will be carried out. The sit-ins at these two universities were representative of the nature of the sit-ins elsewhere and they were short enough for brief details to be included here. Details of many of the other sit-ins will also be mentioned in other subsequent chapters.

The sit-in at Leicester University took place from 26 February to 29 February 1968. As with many other such occupations of university buildings, it seems to have been the result of frustration at the lack of progress on the introduction of student representation in university government. In June 1967 the Students' Union had submitted a memorandum on student representation to the University. By January 1968 there had still been no University reply to the memorandum, and at this point the Union Council condemned the University General Committee for moving an item of interest to students from a committee on which they were represented, to a committee on which they were not represented.<sup>55</sup> At an Extraordinary General Meeting (E.G.M.) of the Union on 18 January, which was attended by more than 800 students, a motion condemning the 'delay in reaching a satisfactory conclusion to negotiations over discipline; representation; catering; library services and Halls and demanding strong and

immediate action from the [Union] Executive' was passed by an overwhelming majority. The E.G.M. gave the University four weeks to come to a decision on representation, and stated that the proposals in the memorandum of June 1967 were the minimum which would be acceptable.<sup>56</sup> At an E.G.M. on 15 February, after the University had failed to reply to the memorandum after the requested four weeks, the Union voted for strike action if their demands were not met. An Action Committee had already been established and it was stated that 'if no decision has been communicated by Monday [26 February], then it shall be assumed that the Union case has been rejected. If this happens, a full-scale programme of protest will immediately swing into action'.<sup>57</sup> When the University's recommendations were published on 26 February they did not include student representation on Senate or Council, but rather gave students representation on peripheral sub-committees such as a Customer Services Committee for the bookshop, a Student Welfare Committee for health, and the Readers' services Committee of the library. During the Senate meeting at which these proposals were decided, 150 students held a protest on the steps outside the building in which it took place. After the publication of the proposals, approximately 300 students occupied the main administrative building (the usual target for sit-ins) in an attempt to gain a more favourable decision.<sup>58</sup>

At first the Vice Chancellor refused to negotiate and thereby made it more likely that the students who were in occupation would either back down or would be more willing to make compromise agreements as it became more difficult, in practical terms, to maintain the sit-in. One student who attended the Birmingham University sit-in in November 1968, for example, noted that 'when you're

sitting-in what can you do about changing your socks? After three days in the same pair they not only have a very distinctive odour...but they also change their original texture to become closely akin to wire mesh'.<sup>59</sup> A participant in the sit-in at Liverpool University in March 1970 also argued that 'the floors were hard, even though the carpets were thick, and few people could get any sleep during the whole of the occupation. Towards the end people were wandering around in a permanent daze, a sleepless stupor'.<sup>60</sup> In such conditions it was impossible to maintain a sit-in for more than a few days, and such a refusal by universities to negotiate, which became a common tactic, exacerbated such situations. Universities may also have refused to negotiate because, as one senior member of staff at Birmingham University suggested during the sit-in at that University in November 1968, 'this action [the sit-in] is thoroughly disgusting and criminal in its attempt at blackmail'.<sup>61</sup> Universities therefore attempted to maintain their traditional role of authority over students, and often refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of students' claims for representation. Such challenges to authority and traditional structures of deference and behaviour were, it seems, deemed to have been inadmissible. Nevertheless, the Vice Chancellor of Leicester University did eventually negotiate with the occupying students and proposed the establishment of a joint working party, with fifty per cent student membership, to discuss student representation. Although the proposal was passed by a large majority at an E.G.M. on 29 January, and the sit-in was brought to an end, the Students' Union magazine *Ripple* makes it clear that many students who took part in the sit-in felt that the agreement was a 'sell out'.

Like the Leicester University sit-in, the sit-in at Birmingham University in November 1968 also originated in moral outrage and frustration at the failure of the Students' Guild to make progress in the reform of the University's government in order to allow for student representation. *Redbrick*, the newspaper of the Students' Guild at Birmingham University, noted in November 1968 that the sit-in was 'the long awaited sequel to the ultimatum issued to the Administration by the guild a month ago. The statement was that if *Student Role* [the recommendations on student representation which had been made to the university by the Guild] was not accepted *in toto*, then "direct action" would ensue. Other important reasons for this demonstration are the Senate's failure to accept the two day teach-in and the refusal to institute the proposed commission on university reform'.<sup>62</sup> On 27 November, the day of the deadline, the University offered limited representation which did not meet the recommendations which had been made in *Student Role*, and so a sit-in by 1,000 students began on the same day.<sup>63</sup> The lobby and Great Hall of the administrative building, as well as the Vice Chancellor's (Dr. Brockie Hunter) offices were occupied by the students. The Vice Chancellor refused to negotiate, and then threatened to expel the occupying students. He then agreed to a review of University government and the sit-in came to an end. The tension was therefore diffused and the Vice Chancellor was then able to create a working party which was acceptable to him, but 'neither to Senate nor to Guild Council'.<sup>64</sup> This body did not report until January 1970, when it proposed reforms which were too limited for the Guild to accept: two students from each faculty, and two from the Guild were to attend restricted part of Senate meetings as observers.<sup>65</sup> The demands for reform which

had been made by students before and during the sit-in were therefore safely contained and held at bay.

The actions of University authorities, then, often appear to have contributed to creating the conditions in which protests by students became more likely, notably by denying formal representation to students within the governmental system of universities, but also in their handling of relations with students. The latter consideration was noted both by students and contemporary observers: one Leeds University student, for example, accused the L.S.E. authorities of acting 'obtusely' in November 1966, in the period preceding the sit-in in March 1967.<sup>66</sup> The *Sun* accused the L.S.E. authorities of having been 'ham-fisted', and argued that the authorities at Essex University, in their reactions to the sit-in there in May 1968, had been 'too high-handed'.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, university authorities were perceived by students to have transgressed moral boundaries in other ways, as will be discovered with the examples of student protest which will be provided below, notably the sit-ins at Warwick and Manchester Universities in 1970.

It should be noted, however, that in 1968 most university authorities were able to contain student demands for representation, and that from 1969 onward the authorities at many universities were able to take disciplinary action against those students and staff who participated in sit-ins. This was the case at the L.S.E. in 1969 following the destruction of security gates within the School by students in January. In reaction the new Director of the School, Walter Adams, closed the School in February, and upon its re-opening the School's Court of Governors dismissed two members of staff for supporting the students.<sup>68</sup>

Moreover, although events at the L.S.E. prompted students at Warwick, Liverpool, Keele, Cambridge, and Essex Universities to hold small sit-ins in support of the students at the L.S.E., many of which were for just 24 hours, these appear to have represented the majority of the sit-ins in 1969.<sup>69</sup> The high point of student involvement in sit-ins, both in terms of the number of students who took part in such protests, and the number of sit-ins, was in 1968. After that date student participation in sit-ins went into an almost continuous decline, though in 1970 there was a temporary, and short-lived, revival of student protest activity on university campuses.

This renewed involvement in protest by students in 1970 was begun by events at Warwick University in February of the same year. The events at this University will be discussed in detail, along with those related events at Manchester University, because they provide further insight into the ways in which the actions of university authorities could prompt student protest. They also continue to highlight the ways in which students had come to demand equality of treatment within universities and were willing to use protests to gain changes in university policy, government, and even personnel. Moreover, a full account of the aftermath of the sit-in has never been written. At Warwick University, approximately 200 students held a 24 hour sit-in at the Registry of the University on 3 February 1970 as a result of the University's failure to come to a decision on whether to construct a Students' Union building.<sup>70</sup> It was hoped that this action would influence a Council Meeting which was scheduled to discuss the Union building on 10 February, but this did not prove to be the case and the Council voted against the building. On 11 February, therefore, a Union



General Meeting 'overwhelmingly rejected the decisions made by Council the previous day concerning the new Social Building and agreed to hold a sit-in in the University Registry for an indefinite period. About 200 students broke into the Registry...and occupied the offices'.<sup>71</sup> During this occupation 'a file was discovered in an unlocked cupboard in an unlocked room' which suggested that, among other things, at least one applicant to the University had been rejected by the Vice Chancellor, Jack Butterworth, on political grounds. It also suggested that industrial spies had been used, with Jack Butterworth's knowledge, in order to monitor the activities of a visiting American lecturer, Dr. David Montgomery, during local trade union meetings. Dr. Edward Thompson then sent copies of these files to members of staff and it was decided 'to open the files in a systematic and orderly way'. On 12 February, at a mass meeting of staff and students, 'the matter of a public inquiry was discussed, and it was decided that the sit-in should be called off' the following day. That night, however, representatives of the University served an injunction upon the occupying students which ordered them to leave the Registry the next morning, and 'that all files and documents borrowed from the Registry, and all copies of them, be returned by that time. It also ordered that no information obtained from the files, etc. should be published'. The following day, on 13 February, the sit-in ended, and on 15 February the Senate announced its decision to hold an inquiry into the holding of political information about staff and students. The inquiry was to be conducted by Viscount Radcliffe, the Chancellor of the University, though at a meeting of staff and students on 16 February an independent public inquiry was called for once more, and the actions of Jack Butterworth were condemned.<sup>72</sup>

The inquiry by Viscount Radcliffe went ahead, however, and its findings were published in April and May 1970. In these, Jack Butterworth was seemingly exonerated from any wrong doing, though the issues raised by the contents of the files which had been discovered were hardly touched upon.<sup>73</sup> Recommendations of changes to the University government were made, including the destruction of all material in files on staff and students which was non-academic related. Yet the University Assembly voted, in June 1970, in favour of a motion which argued that 'Assembly regrets that Lord Radcliffe's Second Report does not adequately discuss evidence supporting the allegations of administrative malpractice and government in the university'.<sup>74</sup> Later in the same month Jack Butterworth made a statement to the Assembly which refuted the allegations against him, including accusations by Professor Epstein that the Vice Chancellor had attempted to blackmail him into withdrawing his support for the construction of a Union building.<sup>75</sup> Despite this, the Assembly still voted in favour of a motion of no confidence in the Vice Chancellor.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, the Vice Chancellor remained, though with checks upon his powers, and a Students' Union building was opened at the University of Warwick in 1974. The authority of the actions of the leading figure of the University had therefore been fundamentally questioned and challenged by students.

Despite the injunction which was placed upon the publication of the Warwick University files, moreover, details of their contents were leaked to the local and national press, as well as to Students' Unions at other universities. This led to sit-ins at a number of universities, including Birmingham, Keele, Liverpool and Manchester.<sup>77</sup>

than I have ever seen before. It was worse than those served at the LSE and at Warwick, because there, the acts had already been committed'.<sup>80</sup> On 12 March however, the sit-in ended due to the University's continued refusal to negotiate. In August 1970 the University withheld money from the Union's annual grant, and argued that it was deducting the cost of the damage which was caused during the sit-in. Although £5,000 of the £7,091 which had been withheld was repaid to the Union, it was not until the arrival of a new Vice Chancellor, Professor Arthur Llewellyn Armitage, in October 1970, that the rest of the money was repaid because he wanted to start 'with a clean slate'.<sup>81</sup>

Punitive measures by universities, particularly recourse to the law, became common from 1970 onward in reaction to the albeit declining number of student protests. Eight students were imprisoned, for example, after their involvement in a demonstration outside the Garden House Hotel in Cambridge in February 1970, and criminal prosecutions were made after a demonstration by students at the University of London Senate House in November 1969.<sup>82</sup> After the sit-in at Liverpool University in March 1970, 10 students were rusticated from the University.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, although the N.U.S. did mobilise mass student support for successful campaigns over grants and students' union autonomy in 1971, which will be described in detail in chapter 4, student protest was in decline and there were few sit-ins after 1970. At Aston University, students held an unsuccessful sit-in in February 1971, and in February 1972, 2,500 Cambridge University students held a sit-in for three days.<sup>84</sup> This was successful in prompting a re-appraisal of the University's governmental structures, though subsequent disciplinary charges against three students resulted in the conviction

and rustication of two of the accused. Although sporadic and isolated sit-in appear to have occurred at various universities throughout the next decade, student involvement in protest, including sit-ins and other forms of protest, never again attained the same frequency or support as those in 1968.

Throughout this chapter, then, it has been suggested that students' frustration at their lack of representation in university governments, and their perception that they were treated in an arbitrary fashion by university authorities, resulted in students participation in protest in the late 1960s. It has also been argued that emotive issues such as the Vietnam War and freedom of speech prompted students to engage in protest activity. Nonetheless, emotive issues have always been a feature of national and international politics, and the treatment of students by universities does not appear to have changed significantly throughout the century up to and including the 1960s. Yet *students did not protest in large numbers until the 1960s*. It is therefore necessary to consider why student protest did not occur before the 1960s, and why it eventually did so at that particular time. This will be carried out in the following chapters, and it will be found, as has been suggested here, that it is necessary to acknowledge that changes in the attitudes which young people displayed towards those in authority is essential to an understanding of the origins of student protest. It will also be found that challenges to authority, and changes in norms of behaviour and deference toward authority, arose as a result of a re-definition of the place of young people in the wider society.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ripple*, 10 December 1963, p. 1

<sup>2</sup> For protests on Rhodesia see *Beaver*, 25 November 1965, p. 5, *Manchester Independent*, 23 November 1965, p. 5, and *Union News*, 19 November 1965, p. 2. For protests against Enoch Powell see *Beaver*, 9 May 1968, p. 1, the *Guardian*, 2 May 1968, p. 1, *Guild Gazette*, 7 May 1968, p. 1, the *Daily Telegraph*, 24 October 1968, p. 1, and *Broadsheet*, 21 November 1968, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> For the origins and course of the Vietnam War, Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (Penguin, 1991) has become the definitive account. Also useful are Anthony Short, *The Origins of the Vietnam War* (Longman, 1989), and George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam 1950-1975* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1986). See also Graham Green, *The Quiet American* (William Heinemann, 1955).

<sup>4</sup> See the back page of the *Declaration of the British Campaign for Peace in Vietnam*, M.R.C., MSS 189, box 1, file 1, for a detailed list of sponsors of the B.C.P.V.. This box contains mainly B.C.P.V. material, though there are also some manuscripts relating to V.S.C.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the C.N.D. march in London in May 1965 in *Sanity*, July 1965, p. 8, M.R.C., MSS 181.

<sup>6</sup> *Declaration of the British Campaign for Peace in Vietnam*.

<sup>7</sup> See *Birmingham Sun*, 30 November 1966, p 2, and *VSC Bulletin*, July-August 1967, No. 6, p. 1, M.R.C., MSS 149, box 5, file 2.

<sup>8</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Autobiography*, Vol. III, 1944-1967 (George Allen and Unwin, 1969), p. 169.

<sup>9</sup> Taken from a V.S.C. poster for the demonstration in London on 27 October 1968, M.R.C., MSS 21/1126.

<sup>10</sup> See membership for entitled 'What is the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign', M.R.C., MSS 21/1124. The quotations provided are from 'the statement of aims adopted at the first national conference of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign'. For an account of the founding and development of V.S.C., and of the anti-Vietnam War campaign, from the perspective of an I.M.G. member and the editor of the *Black Dwarf*, see Tariq Ali, *Street Fighting Years: An Autobiography of the Sixties* (Collins, 1987). For an influential text upon imperialism see Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Harmondsworth, 1967).

- <sup>11</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 7 December 1965, p. 5.
- <sup>12</sup> *VSC Bulletin*, No. 6, July-August 1967, p. 1, M.R.C., MSS 149, box 5, file 2. See also *Campus*, 6 October 1967, p. 1 for a description of the demonstration from a students' perspective and an account of the arrest of two Warwick University students. See also *The Times*, 3 July 1967, p. 1.
- <sup>13</sup> For a full account of the demonstration see *Campus*, 27 October 1967, p. 1. See also *Ripple*, 2 November 1967, p. 2, and *Beaver*, 26 October 1967, pp. 1 and 2.
- <sup>14</sup> See *Darts*, 7 February 1968, p. 7 for a full and detailed account of the demonstration.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Times*, 22 February 1968, p. 2.
- <sup>16</sup> *The Times*, 8 March 1968, p. 3.
- <sup>17</sup> See the *Guardian*, 18 March 1968, pp. 1, 3, and 16, *New Society*, 21 March 1968, p. 405, *Guild Gazette*, 19 March 1968, p. 1, and the *Sun*, 28 October 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>18</sup> See *The Times*, 18 March 1968, p. 1, which estimated the number at 10,000, the *Daily Mail*, 18 March 1968, p. 1, which suggested a figure of 20,000, the *Daily Telegraph*, 18 March 1968, p. 1, which placed the figure at around 8,000 and which was also the figure quoted by the *Daily Express*, 18 March 1968, p. 1. The differences in the figures may relate to each newspapers' position on the war (see chapter 7).
- <sup>19</sup> *Guardian*, 18 March 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>20</sup> *VSC Bulletin*, No. 13, April 1968, pp. 5-6, M.R.C., MSS 149, box 5, file 2.
- <sup>21</sup> *New Society*, 21 March 1968, p. 405.
- <sup>22</sup> *The Times*, 22 July 1968, p. 1. *The Times* does not name V.S.C. as the organiser, and describes the demonstration as 'communist'. The *VSC Bulletin*, however, makes it clear that the demonstration was part of a weekend of activities organised by V.S.C. See *VSC Bulletin*, No. 15, June 1968, M.R.C., MSS 149, box 5, file 2.
- <sup>23</sup> For an account of the occupation of the L.S.E. see *VSC Bulletin*, No. 19, November 1968, pp. 3-4. See also *The Times*, 25 October 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>24</sup> See October 27 Ad Hoc Committee, *Briefing to all demonstrators: 'Street Power'*, MRC, MSS 21/3369/29. This document gives details of the route for the march, starting on the Embankment at Charing Cross, proceeding down Fleet Street and the Strand, past Downing Street to

Parliament Square, and on to a rally in Hyde Park. A full list of the organisations taking part is also provided.

<sup>25</sup> For accounts of the demonstration see *Campus*, 1 November 1968, p. 1, *Darts*, 7 November 1968, p. 7, *VSC Bulletin* No. 19, November 1968, p. 1, the *Guardian*, 28 October 1968, p. 1, and *The Times*, 28 October 1968, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Gallup Poll, *Student demonstrations*, May 1968, question 8.

<sup>27</sup> See the *Guardian*, 16 June 1965, p. 1, and the *Daily Mail*, 16 June 1965, p. 14 and 17 June 1965, p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 22 June 1965, p. 1 and 25 October 1966, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 23 May 1967, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *New Society*, 6 July 1967, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> *Union News*, 21 January 1966, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> *Union News*, 5 May 1967, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 6 February 1967, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> *Redbrick*, 22 November 1967, p. 3, the *Guardian*, 19 March 1968, p. 3, and *Guild Gazette*, 25 November 1969, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> See *Union News*, 6 May 1966, p. 1 and the *Birmingham Sun*, 11 May 1966, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> See *The Times*, 11 July 1966, p. 11, and *Union News*, 9 November 1966, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> *Union News*, 3 March 1967, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> Tariq Ali, quoted in *The Times*, 28 October 1968, p. 1, and *Black Dwarf*, 27 October 1968, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 28 March 1969, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Guardian*, 24 November 1969, p. 16. The My Lai massacre, which took place in March 1968 and involved the murder of over 300 Vietnamese civilians by an American infantry company as part of a 'search and destroy' mission in the village of My Lai (also referred to as Pinkville and Son My), was not reported in Britain until November 1969, when the military cover-up was finally breached by journalists in America. The first report was that of the *Daily Telegraph*, 13 November 1969, p. 4. For further details of the massacre, the cover-up, and the subsequent trial, see Michael Bilton and Kevin Sim, *Four Hours in My Lai* (Penguin, 1993).

<sup>41</sup> For apartheid protests see *Manchester Independent*, 2 December 1969, p. 1, *Union News*, 28 November 1969, p. 1, *Guild Gazette*, 9 December 1969, p. 2, *Broadsheet*, 20 November 1969, p. 1, 4 December 1969, p. 10, and 5 February 1970, p. 1 and pp. 6-7, and *Campus*, 14 November 1969, pp. 4-5, and 27 October 1972, p. 12. See *Guild Gazette*, 4 February 1969, p. 2 and *Union News*, 31 October 1969, p. 2 for demonstrations on Biafra in Liverpool and London respectively. See *Guild Gazette*, 10 March 1970, p. 2 for a demonstration on anti-Semitic policy in the Soviet Union, and *Guild Gazette*, 9 November 1971, p. 3 for a hunger strike in support of Bangladeshi independence. For demonstrations on Northern Ireland see *Campus*, 15 November 1971, p. 12 and 11 February 1972, p. 12.

<sup>42</sup> *Redbrick*, 18 January 1967, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> *New Society*, 10 February 1966, pp. 5-6. See *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), fifth series, Vol. 723, Session 1965-1966, pp. 294-300 for a full text of the Parliamentary debate on the issue.

<sup>44</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 18 January 1966, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Redbrick*, 18 January 1967, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> Sir Sydney Caine, *British Universities: Purpose and Prospects* (The Bodley Head, 1969), pp. 38-40.

<sup>47</sup> For accounts of the development of the R.S.A. see Avishai Zvi Ehrlich, 'The Leninist Organisations in Britain and the Student Movement 1966-1972' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1981), pp. 98-118, and David Widgery, *The Left in Britain 1956-1968* (Penguin, 1976). See also M.R.C., MSS 280, box 51 for archive material relating to the R.S.A.

<sup>48</sup> *Guardian*, 28 January 1967, p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 14 February 1967, p. 2, and *Darts*, 2 March 1967, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> *Redbrick*, 1 February 1967, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> *Birmingham Sun*, 7 February 1967, p. 5. See also *Union News*, 3 February 1967, p. 1, and *New Society*, 16 February 1967, pp. 225-6.

<sup>52</sup> See *Union News*, 24 February 1967, p. 1, *Manchester Independent*, 7 March 1967, p. 3, and *Redbrick*, 1 March 1967, p. 16. See *Darts*, 2 March 1967, p. 5, and *The Times*, 23 February 1967, p. 1 for details of protests around the country.



<sup>53</sup> See, for example, LSE Socialist Society, *LSE: What it was and how we fought it*, 26 April 1967, M.R.C.. This document will eventually be placed in MSS 280. See also Martin Shaw, *LSE*, M.R.C., MSS 152, file 32, which gives an account of the protests at the L.S.E. up to 1969 from the perspective of an I.S. member. See also B. Brewster and A. Cockburn, 'Revolt at LSE', *New Left Review*, 43, pp. 11-25. Harry Kidd, *The Trouble at LSE* (Oxford University Press, 1969) is an account by the Secretary of the School and highlights, inadvertently, the incomprehension of the School's senior staff with regard to the demands of the students. Ronald Fraser, 1968, and David Caute, *Sixty-eight*, also provide useful accounts.

<sup>54</sup> For the occupation of Hornsey see The Staff and Students of the Hornsey College of Art, *The Hornsey Affair* (Penguin 1969). See also M.R.C., MSS 280, box 52 for extensive archive material.

<sup>55</sup> *Ripple*, 18 January 1968, emergency issue, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> *Ripple*, 25 January 1968, p. 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Ripple*, 22 February 1968, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> *Ripple*, 26 February 1968, p. 1 and 7 March 1968, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> *Redbrick*, 4 December 1968, p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 30 April 1970, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> *Redbrick*, 4 December 1968, p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Redbrick*, 27 November 1968, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> *Redbrick*, 4 December 1968, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Redbrick*, 5 March 1969, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> *Redbrick*, 21 January 1970, p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> *Union News*, 25 November 1966, p. 2.

<sup>67</sup> *Sun*, 16 March 1967, p. 2 and 17 May 1968, p. 2.

<sup>68</sup> For a detailed discussion of this protracted series of events see David Caute, *Sixty-eight*. See also *New Society*, 23 January 1969, p. 129; 6 February 1969, pp. 212-213; 24 April 1969, pp. 635-636, and 8 May 1969, p. 700.

<sup>69</sup> *Campus*, 7 February 1969, p. 1, *Guild Gazette*, 4 February 1969, p. 1, *Concourse*, 7 February 1969, p. 1, *The Times*, 31 January 1969, p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> For a New Left critique of the events at Warwick University up to March 1970 see E. P. Thompson, *Warwick University Ltd.* (Penguin, 1970). For an account of the development of the Union building issue from December 1966 to June 1969 see *Union Building, Warwick Union News Sheet*, June 1969, which is part of the volume containing *Campus*. For a full account of the sit-in on 3 February see *Campus*, 6 February 1970, p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> See *Campus*, 20 February 1970, pp. 1 and 10 for accounts of the occupation from 11-13 February.

<sup>72</sup> For the text of the speech by Professor David Epstein, in which he condemned the actions of Jack Butterworth, see Thompson, *Warwick*, pp. 128-130.

<sup>73</sup> See *The University of Warwick, Report of The Right Honourable The Viscount Radcliffe, G.B.E. as to procedures followed in the University with regard to and receiving and retaining of information about political activities of the staff and of students, Dated this 14th day of April 1970*, and *The University of Warwick, Report of the The Right Honourable The Viscount Radcliffe, G.B.E., Part II, Dated this 26th day of May 1970*.

<sup>74</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Assembly on 3 June 1970, p. 5, M.R.C., 21/U/13. This archive material was donated to the M.R.C. by an anonymous individual.

<sup>75</sup> See *Evidence submitted to Lord Radcliffe by D. B. A. Epstein, Warwick University, 6 June 1970*.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes of the Extra-Ordinary meeting of the Assembly held on 26 June 1970, M.R.C., MSS 21/U/13.

<sup>77</sup> For events at Birmingham see *Guardian*, 4 March 1970, p. 12, and *Redbrick*, 11 March 1970, p. 1 and 18 March 1970, p. 1. For Keele see *Concourse*, 13 March 1970, p. 1. The sit-in at Liverpool is explained in *Guild Gazette*, 10 February 1970, p. 12, 17 February 1970, p. 1, 10 March 1970, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 5 March 1968, p. 1, 12 March 1968, p. 1, and 7 May 1968, p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 3 March 1970, p. 4. See also *Manchester, March 1970, 13½ days that shook the university*, M.R.C., MSS 84, box 2, for an account of the sit-in by I.S. members.

<sup>80</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 3 March 1970, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 29 September 1970, p. 1 and 6 October 1970, p. 1.

<sup>82</sup> See *Cambridge Reporter*, Wednesday 14 February 1973, Special No. 12, Vol. CIII, Report of the sit-in in February 1972 and its consequences, by the High Steward, M.R.C., MSS 326, box 75, p. 14, for the Garden House demonstration. See *Beaver*, 3 November 1969, pp. 3 and 10, and 3rd of the Autumn Term 1969, for the London demonstration.

<sup>83</sup> See *Guild Gazette*, 30 April 1970, pp. 1-2.

<sup>84</sup> See *Birmingham Sun*, 9 February 1971, p. 1 for the Aston sit-in, For student protest and campaigns for changes in the university government at Cambridge from 1965 to the sit-in in 1972 see *Cambridge Reporter*, *ibid*. The report is both detailed and balanced.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

The attempt to explain the origins of student protest in the 1960s, which forms the key aim of this thesis, begins with this chapter. Not only does this chapter provide information about the nature of student protests and those who were involved in those protests, which will be useful for the discussions in later chapters, but it begins the analysis of the numerous causal explanations which have been suggested in the past. A number of attempts have been made to explain the occurrence of student protest in the 1960s, and both contemporary and subsequent commentators have often resorted to the use of deterministic models as part of this process. These have usually been based upon assumptions about the social origins, the childhood experiences (particularly with regard to socialisation), the political outlook, and the subjects of study, of those students who did or did not take part in protest activity. In this chapter these deterministic causal hypotheses are examined, and their validity is assessed. In this way it will be found that such explanations are both clumsy, and have been mistakenly applied to the student movement, due to their reliance upon inaccurate assumptions about the student movement.

Although the events which led to protests followed a logical progression of immediate cause and effect, students were not carried inexorably and inevitably into participation in protest. Rather, they decided to do so as result of emotive issues which prompted expressions of opposition in the form of protest. Such a suggestion is not, of course, incompatible with the implication that deterministic considerations could have influenced some individuals to make the decision to take part in protest. Yet the deterministic arguments which will be discussed in this chapter are not only based upon false assumptions about the

nature of the student movement, but they often take no account of the possibility of the role of human agency. By this is meant willed or voluntary action by individuals as opposed to the pre-determination of actions as a result of environment, social trends, historicist trends, or given psychology. This is not to suggest a total and unthinking adherence to the belief in human agency. In the context of student protest in the 1960s, such a reliance upon human agency as the sole, or main causal explanation for protest, is as untenable as a reliance upon determinist hypotheses: it will be noted in chapter 4 that the influence of the left was crucial to the occurrence of protest in the 1960s, and it will be argued in chapter 5 that wider social, cultural, and economic changes resulted in transformations in attitudes to authority among young people without which it is unlikely that mass student protest would have taken place. It is in this context, then, that the deterministic paradigms which have been suggested to explain student protest in the 1960s will be challenged in this chapter.

Indeed, although many students made the decision to take part in protest, it is clear that many did not, and it would be helpful to the discussions which will take place in this and later chapters to examine student attitudes to protest and to arrive at some understanding of the proportion of the student body which did take part in protest, and with what frequency. It may be illuminating, therefore, to note that most students were not engaged in political activity, student politics, or student protest, on a regular basis. The problem of student apathy toward politics, and toward student politics in particular, was not new: in 1930 the N.U.S. complained that 'there was a general complaint of prevailing apathy among undergraduates toward anything not strictly relevant to the acquisition of a

degree'.<sup>1</sup> A 1962 N.U.S. publication, which commented on the 1930 report, confirmed that 'similar remarks have probably been made every year since then'.<sup>2</sup> In 1959, when he was interviewed by the Leicester University Students' Union newspaper *Ripple*, Professor Bruce Miller of the Politics Department agreed that the 'much-discussed apathy on the part of the students towards politics is, on the whole, a normal attitude'.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, this apathy continued to be lamented as a problem throughout the period of the greatest student involvement in protest activity in the late 1960s. For example, one student at Leicester University, whose comments provide a valuable insight and shall therefore be quoted at length, suggested in 1967 that

in spite of a real increase in the interest of students in the way that their Union and University are managed, virtually all intelligent and worthwhile debate on these matters still takes place among relatively small groups in an atmosphere of comparative privacy. The subject of greatest concern has been the apathy that most of us display towards our Union and its role in the wider Community of the University.<sup>4</sup>

Even at the L.S.E. in 1970, after three years of regular protest activity at the School, including a number of sit-ins, one student noted that 'the problem of apathy, has by all accounts, been with the Students' Union for a long time. Apathy is generally deplored, probably by the apathetic themselves, as much as the politically involved'.<sup>5</sup> A survey of students at Warwick University, which was conducted in June 1968, found that only 7 per cent of students were active in politics, while a survey of students at Leeds University, which was carried out in

January 1969, found that only 15.5 per cent were politically active, and 86 per cent of students said that they found Union politics boring.<sup>6</sup>

Yet it was stated in the last chapter that large numbers of students participated in protests at this time. It was estimated, for example, that 2-3,000 students had taken part in the sit-in at Manchester University in 1970. At Birmingham University 1,000 students took part in the sit-in in 1968, and 4,000 students attended the U.G.M. which was held during the sit-in.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, the E.G.M. on 18 January 1968, which preceded the sit-in at Leicester in 1968, was the largest in the Union's history: it was attended by between 800 and 900 students, or 25 per cent of the membership.<sup>8</sup> It seems, then, that during sit-ins those students who were already politically active could rely upon the active support of students who would normally have been described as politically apathetic. Indeed, in a Gallup Poll survey which was conducted at Sussex and Cambridge Universities in May 1968, it was found that 60 per cent of the 270 students who were interviewed at Sussex, and 43 per cent of the 302 students who took part in the survey at Cambridge, were sympathetic to those students who protested about the 'lack of student representation in university academic affairs'. There was opposition from 16 per cent and 32 per cent of students at each institution respectively. Although only 21 per cent of students at Cambridge, and 40 per cent of students at Sussex, had taken part in a demonstration or protest in the twelve months preceding the survey, these students seem to have enjoyed the 'general approval of the majority of their fellow students'. At Sussex, 67 per cent of students believed 'that student protests and demonstrations serve a useful purpose', and only 8 per cent regarded



them as 'harmful'. At Cambridge, 50 per cent approved of student protests, and 22 per cent thought that they were harmful.<sup>9</sup> This approval of, and often active support for, activities which represented challenges to authority, is significant to the discussion of the nature of attitudes to authority which will be pursued further in chapter 5.

This is not to suggest that student protest received comprehensive, uncritical, or even consistent support from the student body. The Gallup Poll survey makes it clear that some students disapproved of protests, while the figures which indicate the numbers of those students who participated in protests, which were quoted above, also imply that large numbers of students did not take part: the U.G.M. at Leicester University may have been attended by 25 per cent of the Union's membership, and it may have voted by 831 to 4 in favour of challenging the University's stance on student representation, but this suggests that 75 per cent of the Union's membership were absent. In a letter to the Warwick University students newspaper *Giblet*, one student condemned protests against the Vietnam War as 'irresponsibility', and saluted the Americans with 'three cheers for Washington having the courage of its convictions to stand up to communist aggression and infiltration. Long may the friendship of our two great nations be united in the struggle to preserve and spread democracy'.<sup>10</sup> It is clear that in some rare cases, disapproval of student protest even took the form of active opposition: at the Birmingham University sit-in of December 1968, anti-sit-in activists threatened those students who were involved in the sit-in with violence.<sup>11</sup> Violent clashes actually occurred during the sit-in at Liverpool University in March 1970, when approximately 300 student members of an

Association of Moderate Students attempted to remove the occupying students by force.<sup>12</sup>

A survey on student participation in protest which was carried out among academic staff at Warwick University in 1994 and 1995 also found that while many students participated in protest, most took part only a small number of times, and some were even opposed to it. The survey, which is reprinted in appendix 5, was distributed among 80 members of Arts Faculty staff in October 1994, and 335 members of the Science and Social Science Faculties in November 1995. Only 16 usable questionnaires were returned from the October 1994 survey, and 46 usable questionnaires were returned from the November 1995 survey: many members of staff were too young, or were not in Britain between 1965 and 1972. A small minority refused to complete the questionnaire, and returned it along with complaints that it was an invasion of their privacy. Among the 62 usable questionnaires, only 15 were returned by people who had not taken part in protest in the 1960s while they had been students. Clearly, this may represent a bias in the survey results: those members of staff who had participated in protests in the 1960s may have been more likely to have returned the questionnaire than those who had not. Nevertheless, if this figure is utilised in conjunction with the Gallup Poll survey which was quoted above, as well as with the figures for participation in protest which were provided in the last chapter, it may be possible to come to the conclusion, albeit tentatively, that despite the small sample size of the more recent survey, it may be indicative of the proportion of students who participated in protests in the 1960s (other problems with the survey will be discussed below). Indeed, of the 47 people who said that

they had taken part in protest, only 14 had taken part in a sit-in, while most people had taken part in demonstrations either once, or a small number of times: only 10 of the 47 said that they had taken part in protests on a fairly or very regular basis (according to their own definition, of course). Among those who did not take part in student protest, only two stated that they had disapproved of it.

Yet while this diversity of student commitment to protest may seem to confirm the suggestion that students took part in protests as a result of voluntary decision making, the many theories which have been expounded in attempts to explain student protest have often sought to use it to confirm the pre-determined nature of individual participation in protest. For example, the theory of family socialisation into politics suggests that 'political attitudes and loyalties are formed at a relatively early age, through childhood exposure to parental influences, direct and indirect'.<sup>13</sup> Ronald Fraser, in his study of the student protest which took place around the world in the 1960s, has suggested that authoritarian parental attitudes resulted in the rebellion against authority which he names as one of the causes of student revolt.<sup>14</sup> Alternatively, other commentators have argued that permissive parental attitudes, combined with middle-class backgrounds, resulted in a generation of students for whom the conformity and disciplines of adult life in an industrial society were unacceptable, and for whom the realities of adult life did not live up to the liberal ideals which they had learned in childhood. In 1965, *New Society* argued that 'this decay in authority is believed to be most visible among young people', and that 'it was the parents themselves who started the rot (if "rot" it is): *they* overthrew the Victorian paterfamilias; *they* urged youth to be free, experimented

with bottle feeding, struggled so that “the kids” could have better homes, more rewarding (in every sense) jobs, better education than themselves. And now, confusingly, “the kids” are biting the hand that fed them’.<sup>15</sup> In 1967, David Donnison, Professor of Social Administration at the L.S.E., referred to student protest as ‘the revolt of the privileged’, while in May 1968, *The Times* equated student protesters with ‘the babies who were picked up’ by their parents.<sup>16</sup> One of the most detailed expositions of this form of analysis was that by the cultural theorist Theodore Roszak, who argued that as ‘the heirs of an institutionalized left-wing legacy, the young radicals of Europe still tend to see themselves as champions of “the people” (meaning the working class) against the oppression of the bourgeoisie (meaning, in most cases, their own parents)’, and that ‘the bourgeoisie, instead of discovering the class enemy in its factories, finds it across the breakfast table in the person of its own pampered children’. He suggested that this was because ‘the disaffected middle class young’ were ‘suffering from a strange new kind of “immiserization” that comes of being stranded between a permissive childhood and an obnoxiously conformist adulthood’.<sup>17</sup>

The social class of those students who took part in protests will be discussed separately below in order to avoid confusion, while post-war attitudes to discipline, which clearly play an important role in the assumptions outlined above, will be examined here. It is naturally impossible to outline the nature of the attitudes to discipline which informed the codes of conduct in each individual family in the post-war period. Nevertheless, the work of Frank Parkin provides some insight into the impact of parental attitudes upon the socialisation into politics of young people in the immediate post-war decades. In May 1965 Parkin

conducted a survey of 550 C.N.D. supporters between the ages of 15 and 25, with the aim of trying to understand the reasons for their support of C.N.D.. Included in this survey, therefore, were questions about the disciplinary attitudes of the parents of those people who were surveyed. The results indicated that 'the most commonly reported type of parental control was the happy medium between authoritarianism and libertarianism, and this held true irrespective of parents' attitudes to C.N.D.'. <sup>18</sup> It was found that only 37 of those who took part in the survey identified their parents as authoritarian, while only 42 identified them as permissive. <sup>19</sup>

A further insight has been provided by the survey which was carried out at the University of Warwick in 1994 and 1995, and which was quoted above. Among the 47 people who returned the questionnaire and who had taken part in protests, four failed to answer the questions on their parents' attitudes to discipline. Among the remaining 43, only three (according to their own definition) described their parents as authoritarian, 11 described them as permissive, and 29 had experienced the 'happy medium'. Among those who did not take part in protest, two refused to answer the relevant question, while only one person said that they had authoritarian parents, two had experienced a permissive background, while the childhood experience of 10 people was described as having been the happy medium. Both surveys therefore suggest that not only do permissive or authoritarian attitudes to parental control seem to have been the least common parental attitudes, but that people from a variety of backgrounds took part in protest. Moreover, the latter survey seems to indicate that people from the same range of possible childhood socialisation scenarios as

those who participated in protest, did not take part in protests. These results should be treated with caution, however, since the lived experiences of each of these people will have been different, even among those who place themselves within the same category.

It is nonetheless difficult to conclude that student protest was linked to familial socialisation. Families do provide one of the primary introductions to moral value systems, and it has been suggested that student protesters were 'more likely to be trying to give expression to liberal ideals inherited from their parents, than to be reacting against repressive home circumstances or the strains of upward social mobility'.<sup>20</sup> The theory that students were reacting to the perceived failure of those in authority to live up to their own, or students', standards of justice, is not being challenged here, and it will be discussed further in chapter 5. Yet changes in attitudes to authority were the result of wider changes, both social and economic. It is tempting to link these changes to transformations in attitudes to the raising of children in the post-war period, but such a suggestion does not withstand closer examination. It is based upon a naive and crude determinism which is itself based upon mistaken assumptions about the nature of parental attitudes (or the perception of parental attitudes) in the post-war period.

Was it the case, however, that the social class of the students who took part in protest determined that participation? A suggested causal link with the middle-class background of student protesters has already been highlighted, but students from working-class backgrounds have also been identified as the students who were most likely to take part in protest. One hypothesis has been that 'the working class is insular; the migrant to the middle class is inclined to

link his little local difficulties with the cause of truth the world over'.<sup>21</sup> Another, perhaps more distasteful interpretation, is that

more students now come from homes with limited intellectual and cultural backgrounds. When they were only a minority it mattered little. Others set the tone of the intellectual and social climate and at the end of three years any first-generation entrant who made the most of the opportunities provided by the university was indistinguishable from his colleagues. Now the 'Yahoos' in the undergraduate population, although a minority still, tend to be quite satisfied to remain as such and they are sufficiently numerous to keep one another in countenance. They are anti-establishment because they have no respect for the values that a university accepts and teaches.<sup>22</sup>

The number of working-class students attending university doubled in the 1960s. Official government statistics based upon the occupations of students' parents are not available for the years before 1968. Nonetheless, a survey of 500 students at University College Cardiff, which was conducted in May 1962, found that 62.1 per cent of students came from middle-class backgrounds, while 33.7 per cent were working-class.<sup>23</sup> This is, of course, only a survey of a part of the student population of one university, and should therefore be viewed with caution. The statistics which have been compiled by the University Central Council on Admissions (U.C.C.A.) represent, perhaps, a more reliable source. These suggest that in 1968, for example, 29 per cent of British students were from working-class backgrounds. Although this figure fell to 27 per cent in 1969, it returned to 29 per cent in 1971 and 1972. In contrast, middle-class students represented 71 to 73 per cent of the student population over the same period.<sup>24</sup> It has already been

noted in chapter 1 that the numbers of students attending university more than doubled in the 1960s, which suggests that there was a corresponding increase in the absolute numbers of working-class students in that decade (see also appendix 1, table 2).

It is nevertheless impossible to suggest a causal link between the social origins of students, and their participation in protest. The exhaustive survey, by Tessa Blackstone *et al*, of students who took part in the L.S.E. sit-in during March 1967, found that there was 'no evidence that support for the boycott and sit-in was drawn in a disproportionate way from students of a working-class or lower-middle-class-background'.<sup>25</sup> The survey which was carried out at Warwick University in 1994 and 1995 also suggests that this was the case. Only two people refused to answer the question relating to their social background, and of the remaining 60 people there were 13 who identified themselves as coming from working-class families. These included two people who had not taken part in protests, and eleven who had done so, while there were 12 people from middle-class backgrounds who had not taken part in protest, and 37 who had. Students from working-class and middle-class backgrounds both did and did not take part in protest, making it impossible to argue that there was a causal link. Student protest does not appear to have been provoked by class conflict or struggle, or by some undefined form of middle class 'ideology'.

Furthermore, while it may seem that the latter survey is flawed in that it has too many unavoidable biases, it has been successful in carrying out the purpose for which it was intended, i.e., to test the deterministic hypotheses which have been and will be discussed in this chapter. For example, the survey is biased



according to the relative size of each faculty (Science being the largest, and Arts being the smallest), and to differences in the employment of males and females in university departments: only 11 women replied to the questionnaire, though this also reflects a gender imbalance in the numbers of women who took part in student protest which will be examined below. It is also open to accusations of being too small to be representative, as well as to questions of whether academics are representative of the students of the 1960s, and even of the impact of the reasons as to why some people returned the questionnaire and why others did not. If the survey had been carried out in an attempt to gain a truly representative picture of the nature of the student movement, then these criticisms would indeed be valid. Yet such a task was not possible, nor was it the aim of the survey. Instead, the survey has been successful in testing a number of deterministic hypotheses, and it has contributed to illustrating their inaccuracy.

This also appears to have been the case with regard to the results concerning the political outlook of those students who took part in protests. Ronald Fraser, and other commentators whose arguments will be discussed in chapter 4, have asserted that most students who took part in protest in the 1960s were supporters of far left politics, with revolutionary goals. This is to misunderstand both the nature of the influence of the far left within the student movement (see chapter 4), and the size of the support for, and membership of, the far left organisations. Indeed, students membership of far left organisations appears to have been relatively small. John Callaghan, in his study of the development of Trotskyism in Britain, has estimated that in 1968 International Socialism (I.S.) and the International Marxist Group (I.M.G.), had a membership

‘which numbered not more than 1,000 between them’.<sup>26</sup> A. Z. Ehrlich, in his study of the role of the Leninist organisations within the British students movement, has suggested that there were 150 members of I.S. in 1965, and that his figure grew to between 450 and 500 in 1968.<sup>27</sup> He has also estimated that I.M.G. had only 40 members in early 1968, which had grown to ‘about 100’ by mid-1969, while the Socialist Labour League (S.L.L.) had between 300 and 400 members in 1968.<sup>28</sup> The Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) (C.P.B.(M-L)), which was a Maoist group founded in 1967, had a membership of ‘a couple of hundreds’ in 1969, and the Young Communist League, the youth section of the Communist Party of Great Britain (C.P.G.B.), had 4,276 members in 1965, 3,452 members in 1968, and just 2,355 members in 1972.<sup>29</sup> Although the I.S. membership has been described as being of ‘predominantly student and white-collar composition’, the S.L.L. has been described as having had ‘no particular interest in the student movement’, with only 50 student members in 1968.<sup>30</sup> It has also been argued that ‘IMG’s ability to lead the student movement was restricted by its small membership and by the initiatives taken by other Leninist organisations. Its main influence among students was via the paper Black Dwarf [sic]’.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, a survey of students which was carried out at Manchester University in February 1969 (see appendix 3, table 7i) indicates that only 6 per cent of students considered themselves to be on the ‘extreme left’. Among those who responded to the survey which was conducted at Warwick University in 1994 and 1995, only 10 people identified themselves in connection with far left organisations, and three of these people said that the Labour Party had most closely reflected their own views. These findings suggest, then, that

student protest, for the majority at least, was not motivated by revolutionary politics.

Student membership of other political organisations, while it does not indicate the political outlook of those who participated in protest activity, does help to place student support for the far left in context. It has been estimated, for example, that N.A.L.S.O. had 7,000 members in 1967, though it was ejected from the Labour Party in that year because it had been infiltrated by members of far left organisations, and it disappeared in 1968.<sup>32</sup> The National League of Young Liberals had approximately 12,000 members in 1965, while the Union of Liberal Students (U.L.S.) had around 10,000 members in 1968.<sup>33</sup> The Young Conservatives had a membership of 120,000 in 1965, though 'the Young Conservative movement is widely spoken of as the best marriage bureau in the country. Notoriously its membership figures are misleading as an index of political activity'.<sup>34</sup> Other, more accurate indicators of student support for political parties, in the form of surveys which have been listed in appendix 3, indicate that the Labour Party was the most popular party among students throughout the 1960s, and across the country. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Conservative Party was usually the second most popular party, and that at Leeds University in January 1969, and at Liverpool University in October 1969, it received more support than any other political party.

Among those who took part in protest, there also seem to have been a variety of political sympathies, though students who supported the Labour Party were by far the most numerous. For example, the 1994 and 1995 Warwick University survey found that among those who protested, there were 26 people

who supported the Labour Party (not including the three who also identified with the far left, who were mentioned above), nine who supported the Liberal Party, and only one who supported the Conservatives. Two of these people failed to answer the relevant question. These findings seem to follow the trends which were highlighted by the survey of the L.S.E. by Tessa Blackstone *et al*, in that 'not only did participation in the sit-in increase from right to left in the political spectrum but that the commitment of those who sat in, measured by the number of days they were involved, also increased in the same direction. In the extreme case of the Left Wing Groups' supporters, more students sat in for the longest period of seven to nine days than for either of the two shorter periods'.<sup>35</sup> It seems, therefore, that although support for student protest was more common among students whose political loyalties lay on the left, such support was not exclusive to the left, making it difficult to maintain that such protests were motivated by party politics. Rather, student protest found support across political boundaries. For instance, the President of the Leicester University Students' Union in 1968, Dick Barbar-Might, when interviewed by the Leeds University student newspaper *Union News*, 'explained the staggering unanimity of the demonstrating students and the superb way in which the ad hoc organisation functioned simply by pointing out that a very moderate leadership found itself allied both with the left wing and the general body of students'.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the sit-in at Birmingham University in 1968 was described by one observer from Sheffield University as a 'very un-militant occupation'.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the Warwick University survey found that among those who did not protest, there were three Labour Party supporters, three Liberals, five Conservatives, a Scottish

Nationalist, and three people who refused to answer the question. In the L.S.E. survey it was found that while 41 per cent of Conservatives said that they had tried to dissuade other students from taking part in the sit-in, and 48 per cent were opposed to the sit-in, 'the proportion of dissuaders and those wholly opposed in other parties were 20% and 23% of the Liberals, 16% and 18% of Labour students, and 1% and 2% of the Left-wing Group supporters'.<sup>38</sup> It is thus not possible to link student involvement in protest directly to their political beliefs, though the challenge to authority and to norms of behaviour which protest represented may have made it more likely that students with socialist beliefs would take part in protest than those who were Conservatives.

Similarly, it is difficult to conclude that the subject of study of students was a determining factor with regard to participation in protest. In contrast, or perhaps in confirmation (depending on one's perspective) of C. P. Snow's support for the humane, enlightened, and progressive nature of Science and scientists, and his opposition to the Arts, which he identified as morally bankrupt, it has been argued that 'protest is most evident among sociologists', and that 'much of the discontent seems to be located in the social science faculties'.<sup>39</sup> In May 1968, *The Times* suggested that 'in Europe and the United States the left-wing radicals are to be found overwhelmingly among students of sociology, psychology, the liberal arts, and related subjects'.<sup>40</sup> An explanation for this supposed phenomenon was provided by an A.U.T. witness for the Parliamentary Select Committee on *Student Relations* during its investigations in 1968 and 1969. He stated that

I would have thought that one of the reasons at a time like this why it is students in sociology, politics, and so on, who are more likely to instigate action of their own accord, is simply that they are being trained properly to ask basic questions about the nature of the institution of which they are part, whereas this is not by and large true of people who study medicine and science and such like. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that it should be these departments where fundamental questions are asked, and that, if society itself is in rather a bad state, this should be part and parcel of the way in which the students think, or indeed in which the staff think.<sup>41</sup>

This may have been an accurate assessment of the reasons for the involvement of some students in protest, but the fundamental assumption which informs it, i.e., that students in social science subjects 'are more likely to instigate action' is not based upon an understanding of the nature of the student movement. For example, in terms of their political outlook, it has been found that only slightly more Science students were Conservatives than Arts students. A survey of students at Leicester University in October 1965 found that twice as many Arts students were 'socialists' as were conservatives, and only 13 per cent were liberals. Among Science students, there were only 6 per cent more socialists than conservatives, while more than 50 per cent of Social Science students supported the Labour Party.<sup>42</sup> A survey of students at Manchester University, which was carried out in February 1969 and is reprinted in full in appendix 3 (see table 7ii) found that there were only minor differences between Faculties in the relative distribution of support for different political viewpoints, though it was the case that marginally more Science students than Arts students were Conservatives.

With regard to protest, it is difficult to provide an estimate of the relative numbers of students from different faculties who took part. Nevertheless, it does seem that Science students did take part in protests. The survey which was conducted at the University of Warwick in 1994 and 1995 found, for example, that 20 Scientists had taken part in protest, 15 Social Scientists had also protested, as had 12 Arts students. Among those who had not protested, there were 11 Science students and four Arts students. Clearly, it is impossible to suggest that this is representative of the proportion of Scientists *vis-à-vis* students from other faculties who did or did not protest, because of the bias in the number of Scientists who both received and returned questionnaires. Yet it does subvert the suggestion that Social Science students formed the main body of student protesters in the 1960s, and that there was a direct causal link between their subject of study and this protest.

Even the gender bias which was hinted at above cannot be said to have had deterministic influences. The Warwick University survey may have included the questionnaires of only 11 women, but eight of these people protested, and three of them did not. Moreover, nationally there appear to have been fewer women who took part in protest as a proportion of the student body, than men. The reasons for this are debatable, but the impact of the student movement, and womens' experience of male attitudes to their participation in protest, will be discussed in the epilogue, in connection with the creation of the women's liberation movement.

Indeed, it seems that none of the deterministic paradigms which have been discussed in this chapter, and which represent the main examples of such

theories, provide valid explanations for the origins of student protests in the 1960s, or for the involvement of some students and not others. They have been shown to be patronising in their assumption that the young people who participated in protest could not have done so as a result of genuine conviction rather than pre-determined inclination. Student participation in protest can perhaps only be understood in the light of the issues which provoked students to protest. It is notable that the issues over which student protest occurred were usually of a moral nature, and involved appeals to students' sense of justice. This may help to explain the diverse political outlook among those who protested, and the presence of normally apathetic students in campus protests. Even those protests which, at first sight, may appear to have been based upon selfish motives, such as demands for student representation in university government, usually had more idealistic and altruistic origins. As the sociologist, Geoffrey Hawthorn, suggested in March 1968, those who took part in protests in the 1960s met 'to express dissatisfaction or disgust with some particular policy or event, but a policy or an event which had nothing to do with them directly'. This was unlike the protests which had taken place in 'the Twenties and on through the Depression', when marches by the unemployed, and other, 'were insistently and consistently about the fundamentals of the social and economic structure at home, about the way in which the economy was organised and about the social effects of that organisation'.<sup>43</sup> It is perhaps notable that while only 2,000 students attended a national N.U.S. demonstration on grant cuts, in London, on 3 March 1968, between 10 and 20,000 people, most of them students, took part in the anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London on 17 March 1968.<sup>44</sup>



The protests about the Vietnam War provide, arguably, the best example of the altruistic or personally disinterested nature of student protests. The war prompted more students to take part in more demonstrations than any other issue. An anonymous member of the Labour Government wrote in the *Guardian* in October 1968 that 'the Labour Party has lost the youth of Britain, and it is Vietnam which has lost them'.<sup>45</sup> A survey of students at Warwick University in June 1968 found that 68 per cent of students disagreed with the American military presence in Vietnam, and the Gallup Poll survey of Sussex University in May 1968 found that 78 per cent of those students who were interviewed were sympathetic to protests against the Vietnam War.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, 25 per cent of those students who were surveyed at Sussex University had taken part in a demonstration against the war. This was more than for any other issue, the nearest alternative being nuclear weapons, which 14 per cent had protested against. Only 5 per cent had protested against 'the low level of student grants'.<sup>47</sup> It may have been the case that more students who protested were sympathetic to the Labour Party (the government whose policy on Vietnam they were opposing), and proportionately more of these students were from middle-class backgrounds. Yet it was the desire for justice from those in authority which prompted student protest, rather than party politics, class struggle, or the desire for revolution, though the latter issues will be discussed further in the next chapter.

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- <sup>1</sup> The National Union of Students, *A Survey of Seven Years of Development, 1930*, p. 22, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 144, file 9.
- <sup>2</sup> The National Union of Students, *The First Forty Years, 1922-1962*, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 144, file 7.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ripple*, 21 February 1959, p. 1.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ripple*, 12 January 1967, p. 3.
- <sup>5</sup> *Beaver*, 12 November 1970, p. 3.
- <sup>6</sup> *Campus*, 25 June 1968, p. 6, and *Union News*, 24 January 1969, p. 1.
- <sup>7</sup> *Redbrick*, 4 December 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ripple*, 25 January 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>9</sup> Gallup Poll, *Student demonstrations*, May 1968, p. 1, and questions 1b, 5, and 6.
- <sup>10</sup> *Giblet*, 9 March 1966, p. 3. See also *New Society*, 23 March 1967, p. 421 for the comments of an L.S.E. student who had opposed the sit-in.
- <sup>11</sup> *Redbrick*, 4 December 1968, p. 3.
- <sup>12</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 10 March 1970, p. 1.
- <sup>13</sup> Frank Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism* (Manchester University Press, 1968), p. 145.
- <sup>14</sup> Ronald Fraser, *1968* (Chatto and Windus, 1988), pp. 68-69. For other contributions to the debate on family socialisation see Joseph R. DeMartini, 'Generational Relationships and Social Movement Participation', *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 62, No. 4, November 1992, pp. 450-463, or Darren E. Sherkat and T. Jean Blocker, 'The Political Development of Sixties Activists: Identifying the Influence of Class, Gender, and Socialization on Protest Participation', *Social Forces*, Vol. 72, No. 3, March 1994, pp. 821-824.
- <sup>15</sup> *New Society*, 22 July 1965, p. 10.
- <sup>16</sup> Tessa Blackstone, Kathleen Gales, Roger Hadley, Wyn Lewis, *Students in Conflict: L.S.E. in 1967* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), p. xxi.
- <sup>17</sup> Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture* (Faber and Faber, 1970), pp. 2 and 34-35.

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- <sup>18</sup> Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism*, pp. 155-156. For a critique of Parkin's methods and findings see John Mattausch, *A Commitment to Campaign: A Sociological Study of CND* (Manchester University Press, 1989), pp. 1-14.
- <sup>19</sup> Parkin, *ibid.*, p. 46.
- <sup>20</sup> Stephen Hatch, 'From C.N.D. to newest Left', in David Martin (ed), *Anarchy and Culture: The Problem of the Contemporary University* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 125.
- <sup>21</sup> David Martin, 'Trouble in the University', *Listener*, 7 March 1968, p. 292.
- <sup>22</sup> *Student Relations, Report from the Select Committee on Education and Science*, Session 1968-1969, Committee A, Memorandum by Professor R. T. Severn and Mr. S. T. Newing, Volume IV, H.M.S.O., Cmnd. 449-i, pp. 256-257.
- <sup>23</sup> *Broadsheet*, 10 May 1962, p. 7.
- <sup>24</sup> University Central Council on Admissions, *Statistical Supplement to the Tenth Report 1971-1972* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1973), table K4, p. 20. See also Joan Abbott, *Student Life in a Class Society* (Pergamon, 1971).
- <sup>25</sup> Blackstone *et al*, *Students in Conflict*, pp. 199-200.
- <sup>26</sup> John Callaghan, *British Trotskyism: Theory and Practice* (Blackwell, 1984), p. 130. Brief histories of these groups will be provided in chapter 5.
- <sup>27</sup> Avishai Zvi Ehrlich, 'The Leninist Organisations in Britain and the Student Movement 1966-1972' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1981), p. 52.
- <sup>28</sup> Ehrlich, *ibid.*, pp. 60 and 49.
- <sup>29</sup> Ehrlich, *ibid.*, pp. 67 and 77.
- <sup>30</sup> Callaghan, *Trotskyism*, p. 104, and Ehrlich, *Leninist*, pp. 47-49.
- <sup>31</sup> Ehrlich, *ibid.*, p. 61.
- <sup>32</sup> See Ehrlich, *ibid.*, pp. 87-97. See also David Widgery, *The Left in Britain 1956-68* (Penguin, 1976), pp. 311-312, and Bruce T. Bebington, 'The decline and fall of NALSO', in *Student International*, March 1969, No. 2, pp. 2-4, M.R.C., MSS 149/4/3. Bebington was the chair of N.A.L.S.O. when it was forced out of the Labour Party. For further information see A. H. Halsey and Stephen Marks, 'British Student Politics', in *Daedalus*, Vol. 97, No. 1, Winter 1968, p. 125.

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- <sup>33</sup> See Halsey and Marks, *ibid.*, p. 118 for the U.L.S., and Philip Abrams and Alan Little, 'The Young Activist in British Politics', *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1965, p. 316 for the Young Liberals, and p. 327 for an estimate of 5,000 for the membership of the U.L.S. in 1965.
- <sup>34</sup> Abrams and Little, *ibid.*, pp. 316-317.
- <sup>35</sup> Blackstone *et al*, *Students in Conflict*, pp. 205-207.
- <sup>36</sup> *Union News*, 8 March 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>37</sup> *Darts*, 5 December 1968, p. 12.
- <sup>38</sup> Blackstone *et al*, *Students in Conflict*, p. 207.
- <sup>39</sup> C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), and the *Listener*, 11 July 1968, p. 51; *Spectator*, 31 May 1968, p. 736.
- <sup>40</sup> *The Times*, 29 May 1968, p. 10.
- <sup>41</sup> *Student Relations*, Volume I, p. 134. See also Robin Allen, 'Student Revolt', *Brief 16* (The Economist Newspaper Ltd., 1969).
- <sup>42</sup> *Ripple*, 21 October 1965, p. 8.
- <sup>43</sup> Geoffrey Hawthorn, 'Demonstrations', *Listener*, 21 March 1968, pp. 361-363.
- <sup>44</sup> *Campus*, 8 March 1968, p. 1, *Guild Gazette*, 5 March 1968, p. 1, and *Union News*, 8 March 1968, p. 3.
- <sup>45</sup> *Guardian*, 1 October 1968, p. 8.
- <sup>46</sup> *Campus*, 25 June 1968, p. 6, and Gallup Poll, *Student demonstrations*, question 2.
- <sup>47</sup> Gallup Poll, *ibid.*, question 4.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE FAR LEFT AND THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

As part of the re-appraisal of the role of the far left within the student movement which was begun in the last chapter, the discussions in this chapter will be crucial to the understanding of those which will take place in the next chapter. Once again it will be argued here that few students were motivated by revolutionary objectives when they participated in protest, and that within the student movement the challenge to authority which protest represented was perceived in different ways. It will be found, then, that far from being a monolithic expression of revolutionary fervour, the student movement was a complex conglomerate of movements, and that the contribution of the left to the development of the student movement was not in the provision of a revolutionary outlook (at least for the majority), but rather in raising the profile of, and creating confrontation over issues such as the Vietnam War, and student representation. This was the result of the factional struggles which took place between the far left groups in their attempts to use the student movement for revolutionary purposes, which both helped to prompt student protest, and impeded the left. Moreover, the left was able to gain support for protests from otherwise apathetic students, but only because those students were willing to challenge the decisions of those in authority.

Most contemporary accounts agreed that the far left was a minority among students, but they usually suggested that it was the far left which directed student protest. In the national press, for example, a plethora of articles lamented the 'corrupting' influence of the far left minority. For example, in an article on the subject in May 1968, the editor of *The Times*, referring to the far left, argued that,

it is constantly repeated that the students who carry their intolerance to the borders of violence and anarchy are a very small proportion of the whole. That is doubtless true. But...they have been able to impose their will on the majority, and in so doing are able to modify the character of their institutions. The remedy lies with the majority of staff and students who would not willingly see degeneration occur.<sup>1</sup>

In March of the same year, the *Guardian* had reported that,

there is also a fear of organised agent provocateurs. One university administrator said yesterday; "There is a group who are making a lot more noise than their numbers might indicate. I suspect it is to some extent a travelling circus and it is getting students generally a bad name".<sup>2</sup>

Writing in the *Listener* in July 1968, John Sparrow, the Warden of All Souls, Oxford, complained that 'students have relied not on pressure exerted along constitutional lines, nor on the backing of their claims by a majority...but simply on force or the threat of force: they seem to have learned the lesson inculcated in Régis Debray's *Revolution in the Revolution?* that 'to show force is in effect to use it'.<sup>3</sup> It seems that this belief in the dominance of the left in student protest was commonly held, both in the media and among university administrators, and unfortunately it has also informed more recent accounts.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the most important of these is Ronald Fraser's *1968*, because it has become the definitive study of the global phenomenon of student protest in the 1960s.<sup>5</sup> In his examination of the British student movement, Fraser suggests that student protest

was indeed dominated (in terms of numbers, outlook, and motivation) by the far left, though in this case the interpretation is a positive one, unlike the negative viewpoint of the press in the 1960s. This interpretation may be due to his use of interviews with participants in protest who were overwhelmingly from the section of the student movement who were active in far left politics. Yet A. Z. Ehrlich has acknowledged that 'one of the images which became associated with students during the late 1960s, and especially after May 1968, was of students as opponents of the existing social order and as new agents of revolutionary change'.<sup>6</sup>

This mistaken interpretation may also have been arrived at because it seemed to have been given credibility by the revolutionary rhetoric and actions (see below) of those students who were on the far left in the 1960s. It seems that, for many on the far left, the student movement was seen both as symptomatic of a crisis in capitalism, and as a possible agent for the destruction of the capitalist system. In the *Black Dwarf*, for example, headlines such as 'Students. The new revolutionary vanguard', and 'All power to the Campus Soviets', were expressions of sentiments which were expanded upon in articles such the one which reported a speech by the Belgian Trotskyist, Ernest Mandel, in which he suggested that students 'can and they must play a powerful role as a detonator. By playing this role within the working class, above all through the intermediary of young workers, they can free in the working class itself enormous forces for challenging capitalist society and the bourgeois state'.<sup>7</sup>

Yet these were expressions of the revolutionary *potential* of the student movement. The *Marxist Youth Journal*, an I.M.G. publication, expressed what



seems to have been a common view when, in 1969, it argued that 'one of the astounding peculiarities of the British left is the absence of a viable revolutionary youth movement'.<sup>8</sup> This was echoed by the *Black Dwarf* which, in October 1968, reported that '1968 has been the year of the student revolutionary...But not in Britain. We are the only major capitalist country which has not produced a comparable student movement. There have been isolated cases of student insurrection and students have been dominant in the anti-imperialist struggle, but there has not been a mass student movement'.<sup>9</sup> It was argued that with its untapped and unfulfilled revolutionary potential, the student movement should be directed by the left, and to this end each 'revolutionary situation', notably major sit-ins, were analysed in detail by the far left organisations for what could be learnt and put into practice next time such a situation arose.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the possible motivating considerations behind this desire to control the student movement have been outlined by A. Z. Ehrlich in his study of the relationship between the Leninist organisations and the student movement. His analysis will be used as the basis for the interpretation of the aims and policies of the far left which will take place in this chapter. He explains that

"Leninism" as usually understood entails very clearly two distinct hierarchical principles: (1) of all classes and strata in industrialized societies, only the working class has the potential to carry out a socialist revolution; (2) the socialist transformation can take place only through the organisation of the most conscious part of the working class in a well disciplined centrally controlled organisation - the revolutionary party.<sup>11</sup>

He argues that, as a result, three conclusions can be arrived at: first, that any struggles by other parts of society are not revolutionary and must therefore 'be subordinated to and subsumed within the struggles of the working class'; second, that organisations working for reform are not revolutionary and must also be brought under the control of the party; third, that 'there cannot be two "correct" yet different revolutionary strategies. Therefore, there cannot be two or more "truly" revolutionary organisations'. Other organisations which claim to be revolutionary must merge or be in conflict. The concept of the "revolutionary party" is exclusive'.<sup>12</sup> The result was a desire by each far left organisation to dominate the student movement exclusively, both in opposition to other far left organisations, and other social movements. This manifested itself in a number of ways, which can be illustrated by an examination of far left activities on campuses and in demonstrations, and the far left's relationship with the N.U.S. and the counter-culture. This will further help to clarify the nature of the role of the far left within the student movement.

The far left appears to have viewed campus protests as microcosms of the struggle in society as a whole, with the result that they used them to challenge capitalist society. It was argued that the motivation behind the rapid expansion of universities in the wake of the *Robbins Report* was the provision of highly skilled 'factory fodder' for industry. An article in the L.S.E. Students' Union newspaper *Beaver* in February 1967, for example, argued that 'we are not fighting against bureaucratic incompetence; we are fighting against the pressures that big business will increasingly come to assert to make the universities "safe" to invest its money in, and to produce the products that it needs'.<sup>13</sup> At Keele University, a

sit-in in support of students at the L.S.E. was held in February 1969. It was carried out by 90 left-wing members of an Action Group, one of whom argued that 'the issue of L.S.E. cannot be separated from the situation of students nationally. The Government is determined to rationalise and streamline the production of graduates to fit the refurbished economy. It must control the costs and protests which result...The production-line university can exist only where students have no effective rights'.<sup>14</sup> At Manchester University in October 1968, two members of the Socialist Society were arrested after painting graffiti on University and U.M.I.S.T. buildings which stated that the University was 'a machine churning out degree-clutching technocrats and bureaucrats tailor-made to fit the needs of a moribund society'.<sup>15</sup> Other similar examples abound, perhaps most notably E. P. Thompson's *Warwick University Ltd.*<sup>16</sup> For the left, then, the fight for student rights became part of their challenge to capitalist society as a whole. With this in mind, far left activists played a central role in giving publicity to issues such as representation, disciplinary procedures, and indeed, the whole future of educational policy and practice both nationally and at individual universities.

Yet far left organisations had existed before 1965, and had not been responsible for prompting students to protest. It has been suggested that 'the radicalization of students in Britain overlapped in time with the emergence of polyleninism, was influenced greatly by it and in turn influenced the development of leninist organisations'.<sup>17</sup> Put simply, it appears that the development in the 1960s of a number of far left organisations who were competing with each other for recruits and for their place as the one true

revolutionary party may have had an impact upon the student movement. For example, in 1965 I.S. began its withdrawal from its entryist position of working within the Labour Party, and began to expand its activities in industry and among students. Although I.M.G., the other far left organisation which maintained an interest in the student movement, did not officially leave the Labour Party until 1969, it also began to work outside that Party in the mid-1960s. When the collapse of N.A.L.S.O. in the Spring of 1967 left the way clear for the formation of Socialist Societies at Universities which were beyond the control of the Labour Party, the members of these two groups, particularly of I.S., formed the core of the membership of these societies. A measure of their impact is perhaps provided by the observation that University College Cardiff, which was one of the few universities not to possess a Socialist Society, was also one of the few major Universities to avoid a major sit-in. Furthermore, with more far left organisations competing for support among students, it was necessary for each of these groups to raise their profile in Universities in their attempts to become the sole representatives of student interests. In this sense, it is significant that John Callaghan has noted that members of far left organisations devoted considerable amounts of their daily time to promoting and publicising their party and its policies, and that this level of commitment was exceptional in that the members of other political parties which were not on the far left did not devote as much of their daily lives to politics. As a result, issues such as representation and the Vietnam War attained a new significance, and a new level of publicity among students, as did the possibility of the use of protest.

Indeed, members of these organisations consistently took part in activities which were aimed at provoking oppressive responses from university authorities or the police, thereby highlighting the inadequacy of existing democratic forms. At the L.S.E. in 1966-7, it was the Socialist Society report on Walter Adams which began the series of events which eventually led to the sit-in in March 1967. This sit-in was begun by a group of Socialist Society students, who were later joined by other members of the student body.<sup>18</sup> At Leeds University, the disciplinary procedures which followed a violent demonstration against Patrick Wall MP on 3 May 1968, gave the left-wing '3rd May Committee' the opportunity to highlight the inadequacies of the universities' disciplinary system, and to provoke a sit-in which enjoyed widespread support among the student body at Leeds.<sup>19</sup> At the sit-ins at Essex, Hull and Manchester University in 1968, among other sit-ins, it was the actions of members of far left organisations which prompted normally apathetic students to take part in protest. As John Rex, Professor of Social Theory and Institutions at Durham University, observed in May 1968,

normally there is no way of answering back, of widening the argument or stating the contrary view. But if a "happening" can be organised so that consent is shown...to depend on clubbing demonstrators with batons, a new element has entered into politics. So even though students might not be able to take power or to win elections, they could do much to give the politicians and the electorate an uneasy conscience.<sup>20</sup>

The dilemma which such provocation posed for those in authority was discussed by John Berger in *New Society*, also in May 1968, when he noted that during demonstrations,

either authority must abdicate and allow the crowd to do as it wishes: in which case the symbolic becomes real, and, even if the crowd's lack of organisation and preparedness prevents it from consolidating its victory, the event demonstrates the weakness of authority. Or else authority must constrain and disperse the crowd with violence: in which case the undemocratic character of such authority is publicly displayed.<sup>21</sup>

David Triesman, for example, who took part in the Essex University sit-in in May 1968, wrote in the *New Left Review* that 'what we should do, if the situation were to arise again, would be to behave as provocatively as necessary and to effectively sanction the University to the extent that they *need* to use force, probably the police'.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, after the sit-in at Hull University in June 1968, Tom Fawthorp, who had taken part, also wrote in the *New Left Review* that 'other confrontations (e.g. L.S.E., Essex), have largely been based on a defensive strategy arising from the victimisation of particular students. At Hull the issues were taken to the authorities rather than the other way round...This has important implications for developments elsewhere: students do not have to wait for the authorities to provoke the student body'.<sup>23</sup> These acts of provocation could only have an impact if students were willing to challenge those in authority. Far left organisations may have existed before the 1960s, but it was only in the 1960s, when attitudes to authority had changed among young people, that they could gain support for protests among students who were normally apathetic. It was

noted in the last chapter that those students who were supporters of the far left were usually the students who were most committed to protests. It was also noted that most students were apathetic, but that those students who were politically active, who were represented most particularly by supporters of the far left, could count upon the support of normally apathetic students during protests. While the attitudes of the press which were highlighted above would seem to have been at odds with the ways in which supporters of the left perceived their role within the student movement, then, the vocal political activity of those on the far left made it easy and convenient for contemporary observers to identify them as the cause of student protest. This is to misunderstand the role of the far left. It would appear that members of the far left acted as catalysts in encouraging other students to take part in protests, and that without the changes in attitudes to authority among the student body in general, it is unlikely that they would have been able to make the impact which they did.

That this was the role of the far left is further illustrated by the observation that these tactics of provocation highlighted a difference in the attitudes to authority between students who supported far left organisations, and those who did not. Members of the far left appear to have rejected the legal and traditional legitimacy of the authority of the state, or university administrations, and therefore sought to subvert and possibly replace them. This does not seem to have been the stance taken by most student protesters, however, as was suggested in chapters 2 and 3. Most student protest does not appear to have been concerned with attacking the very legitimacy of those in authority to exercise that authority, whether they were in national or university governments. Instead, it seems to

have been aimed at the reform of the extent of that authority, and the policies and actions of those in authority, and usually with a view to gaining some role in the decision making process which informed that authority. When those in authority were perceived to have transgressed the moral bounds of that authority, their authority came into question, and student protest resulted. This was the case both for those on the far left, and other students, but it was only those on the far left who appear to have wanted to replace or abolish existing sources of authority, rather than to reform them or their policies, and who therefore sought to provoke those in authority into oppressive acts. It was noted after the Cambridge University sit-in in 1972, for example, that

there is a tiny fraction of the student body - if it were as large as 100, it would only be 1 per cent - who see University government as part of the 'power structure' *which they aim* to destroy. The forum is the Socialist Society...which operates on the left wing of the C.S.U. [the Cambridge Students' Union]...It includes a number of able and articulate students who come to the front when trouble occurs and undoubtedly some of them took part in the sit-in. The Economics students in their evidence say that the sit-in was not seen by them as a means of disrupting the University or of destroying its institutions, though they agree that a small number taking part may have seen it as an attempt to cause chaos or disruption.<sup>24</sup>

For the majority of students, then, the revolutionary overthrow of existing forms of authority does not seem to have their aim. Only if such revolutionary change had been their aim, could the role of the far left organisations be said to have been different to that which has been suggested here.



A corresponding difference in attitudes between the far left and the rest of the student body seems to have existed with regard to acts of violence, as was suggested in chapter 2. At the L.S.E. in 1969, it was left-wing students who attacked and tore down security gates within the School, thereby provoking an oppressive response from the School. These students also seem to have been responsible for attacks on School property in the aftermath of the destruction of the gates, and in violence which took place during a demonstration at the University of London Senate House in October 1969.<sup>25</sup> During the anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London on 27 October 1968, the British Vietnam Solidarity Front, a Maoist group, 'distinguished itself in violent confrontations with the police'.<sup>26</sup> At Keele University in 1970, the Socialist Society, in the wake of petrol and paint bomb attacks on the offices of the Senior Tutor and Registrar respectively, argued that 'if the perspective is one of immediate revolution (as both possible and to be welcomed) then total disruption by (almost) any means is the most viable course of action'. It went on to say that 'there can be no question of compromising with those who are opposed in principle to damage to property'.<sup>27</sup> Yet it was noted in chapter 2 that most students disapproved of violent protests. This is not to suggest that all those students who supported the far left were willing to engage in acts of violence, or that all those who were not supporters of the far left were not willing to take part in violent activities. Yet in the context of provoking those in authority, or in reaction to violence from those in authority, those students who supported the far left groups seem to have been more willing to engage in acts of violence, and less likely to have used the tactic

of passive resistance or negotiation, than those students who did not support the far left.

The anti-industry and anti-technology outlook which was outlined above as being among the attitudes which informed the far left also seem to have been unrepresentative of the majority of students as a motivation for participation in protest. Christopher Booker has argued, in his study of the *Revolution in English Life in the fifties and sixties*, that student protest was the result of 'the growing resentment against the impersonality of societies dedicated apparently to serving the Molochs of technology, bureaucracy and mass-consumption'.<sup>28</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that students who were not members of far left organisation were motivated to protest because of the role of industry in universities, or anti-technology beliefs. Such evidence may exist, and these beliefs may have provided motivation for participation in protest, but it seems to be unlikely that students would not give expression to such beliefs on a regular basis if they were significant motivating influences.

Clashes with universities were also opportunities for the left to challenge Students' Union leaderships, and again this does not seem to have been the aim of most students. In an article in the *Black Dwarf* about the Birmingham University sit-in in November 1968, Pete Gowan argued that 'direct action on a mass scale was bound to pose as great a threat to the power of the union bureaucracy as to the university authorities'. The left 'had initiated the confrontation', and during the occupation

the Socialist Union realised the importance of building an alternative power to that of the Students' Union. It therefore fought for the principle of "all power to the General Assembly of the occupation" and for the setting up of a Committee of Ten which would lead the sit-in being directly responsible to, and subject to instant recall by, the General Assembly. This alternative structure to that of the Students' Union was in fact established and opened the way for the destruction of the formal representative democracy of the Union and the institution of direct mass democracy.

Nevertheless, Gowan was forced to concede that 'when the occupation ended the Union re-emerged with its strength unimpaired and once again recognised as the representative organ of the student body'.<sup>29</sup> Similar attempts to replace Student Union administrations were made during most major sit-ins, and most failed to last beyond the conclusion of the sit-in.<sup>30</sup>

Attempts were also made to subordinate the student movement to the revolutionary struggle of the working class by encouraging students to take part in industrial and political disputes. Ernest Mandel's opinions on the importance of this have already been stated, and other examples of similar opinions, throughout the far left are numerous. Indeed, this conforms to A. Z. Ehrlich's interpretation of the aims of the Leninist organisations which was outlined above. The *Black Dwarf*, for example, argued that 'everyone agrees that only the workers can make a revolution', while the *Marxist Youth Journal* argued that the student movement suffered from 'grave weaknesses' stemming from 'the transient and unstable milieu in which it exists and from its isolation from the worker's movement'.<sup>31</sup> A supporter of the far left at Keele argued that 'students cannot expect to solve their problems by themselves and for themselves. They

are involved in and must involve the whole of society'.<sup>32</sup> In somewhat more grandiose terms the left at the L.S.E. declared in 1969 that students should 'let the workers realise we are wasting taxpayers' money. We are trying to help them get some value. We are eager to turn our present system from one where an elite are produced to continue oppressing them. We do not want to be such a callous elite. Our aim is to free everybody from the chains of exploitation'. They added that 'with our spirit and dignity let the forces of evil tremble. No man should rest until exploitation dies', and that 'almost without noticing it we have been precipitated to the head of the class and anti-oppression struggle in this country.' They also argued that 'we must push for unity with the workers'.<sup>33</sup> Students were therefore encouraged to subordinate their interests to those of the working class. At Manchester University, for example, Socialist Society members took part in the Roberts Arundel strike throughout November 1967.<sup>34</sup> Students at Liverpool University also participated in the Roberts Arundel strike, as part of the Socialist Society's aim to 'support all workers' struggles'. They also gave money to the strike at Lucas-CAV Fazarkerley, and distributed 60,000 leaflets to Council houses on Merseyside in opposition to rent increases, thereby prompting a rent strike.<sup>35</sup> Such actions did not attract the support of the majority of students, however, as will be discussed below.

This desire to subordinate the student movement to their own revolutionary aims, and to those of the working class, were also motivations behind the infiltration of the N.U.S. by the far left organisations, especially the C.P.G.B.. This will be examined in detail, since it highlights the nature of the role both of the N.U.S., and that of far left, within the student movement, in

terms of their desire to control the student movement and their encouragement of the use of protest. Moreover, the N.U.S. was the only national representative body for students. A detailed consideration of its role within the student movement, and *vice versa*, is arguably essential to this study therefore. The infiltration of the N.U.S. by the far left was made possible by the apparently widespread exasperation among students with the ineffective nature of N.U.S. campaigns. The use of parliamentary lobbying and 'sherry diplomacy' by the N.U.S., and the leaderships' refusal to use more forceful techniques of direct action, were lamented by numerous students. The editor of Aston University's *Birmingham Sun*, for example, complained in June 1965 about the N.U.S. campaign for higher grants by suggesting that 'the way in which the N.U.S. is protesting, and the aspects about which it is protesting, are felt by many students to prove that students' interests are in the hands of a set of spoilt children who have not quite got used to the immense power and influence at their disposal'.<sup>36</sup>

The first serious attempt by the left to use this disaffection in the struggle for the control of the N.U.S. was the formation of the R.S.A. in October 1966, following the initiative of the C.P.G.B (see also chapter 2). Although it was eventually dominated by the C.P.G.B., the R.S.A. originally represented a wide variety of viewpoints including Liberal and Labour, as well as the far left, as was noted in chapter 2. Through the use of the national and student press, as well as its role in the campaign over overseas students' fees in February and March 1967, the R.S.A. was able to highlight the shortcomings of the N.U.S. leadership in dealing with long standing student grievances.<sup>37</sup> Yet instead of meeting this challenge by proposing the reform of the Union, the N.U.S. leadership sought to

discredit the R.S.A.. At the N.U.S. Spring Council of March 1967, for example, Geoffrey Martin, the N.U.S. President, argued that 'if they continue unchallenged they will split the union. If a ginger group is to prove its worth, it must be judged on what strength and backing it has given. My answer is that they had [*sic*] contributed nothing. They have weakened us and they must not be allowed to weaken us further'.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, it was also able further to damage the credibility of the N.U.S. leadership in the light of the admission by the National Student Association of America (N.S.A.), in February 1967, that it had been funded by the C.I.A..<sup>39</sup> Because of the mutual association of the N.U.S. and the N.S.A. in the International Student Conference, it was implied that the N.U.S. could have been compromised by funding, and possible infiltration, by secret services, particularly via N.U.S. funding from the Fund for International Student Co-Operation.<sup>40</sup> Although an internal investigation by the N.U.S. found that there was no evidence of such funding or infiltration, the R.S.A. was able to use these allegations to attempt to undermine the N.U.S. leadership at the N.U.S. Spring Council in March 1967.<sup>41</sup> The R.S.A. ceased to exist as an effective political force in late 1967, but it had succeeded in damaging the credibility of the N.U.S. leadership, it had raised the profile of issues such as student representation and the use of direct action among the student body, and had enabled the C.P.G.B. to begin its campaign to control the Union, which it did alone among the far left organisations until 1970.

Along with a broad left group of students the C.P.G.B. took advantage of the dissent within the Union, along with the development of the radicalism of students, to strengthen its position. Again, the N.U.S. leadership maintained their

attempts to discredit their opponents, rather than reform their position. In March 1968, the *Guardian* reported that at an N.U.S. rally on grants in Trafalgar Square, Martin had told his members that

their campaign for an increase in student grants could be threatened by the actions of a minority of militants. In the last week, he said, students at eight colleges and universities had erupted in the public eye, culminating in the barracking of Mr. Patrick Gordon Walker in Manchester University. Not one of these incidents involved a majority of students. This was organised disruption. Small extremist groups were spoiling the chance of success of the campaign for the majority who faced poverty.<sup>42</sup>

By attacking protests by students (who were N.U.S. members after all) on campuses, and in failing to recognise the grievances behind attacks on the N.U.S. itself, the N.U.S. leadership alienated many of their members. Moreover, by making it impossible for moderates to reform the Union, they left the way open for the C.P.G.B. and more militant students to seize control as the only viable alternative. At Liverpool University, for example, the editor of the *Guild Gazette* suggested that 'NUS is dead' in February 1968.<sup>43</sup> Following Geoffrey Martin's speech in March 1968, the same editor, a moderate student, expressed what appears to have been the majority view by arguing that 'Geoff Martin is totally unsuited to lead a mass student movement', that he had 'sold everyone down the river', and that

certainly demonstrating down Whitehall or storming a minister's meeting will not help, but then we have nothing to lose. There comes a time, even in a non-campaign, when

some form of direct action is necessary if we are to have any hope of achieving anything. We, as students, have no chance of success if we employ conventional means of pressuring the government. The lobby will yield absolutely nothing.<sup>44</sup>

After Geoff Martin (seemingly without success) told N.U.S. members not to attend the giant anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London on 27 October 1968, dissatisfaction with the N.U.S. leadership boiled over.<sup>45</sup> At the N.U.S. Conference in April 1969 Jack Straw, on the moderate left, was elected President in place of Geoff Martin's successor, Trevor Fisk.<sup>46</sup> This was the first time that an N.U.S. President had been replaced after only one year, instead of the customary two years in office. Clause 3 of the Constitution was altered to allow the discussion of political issues, and resolutions against racism, apartheid, and American involvement in Vietnam were passed. On the 15 strong Executive, six left Labour and Communist students were elected. After this success for the C.P.G.B., the policy of the N.U.S. was increasingly directed by the Party. Indeed, in April 1971, Digby Jacks became the first Communist Party member to be elected as President of the N.U.S..<sup>47</sup> As well as resulting in more militant campaigns in student issues, most notably the highly successful Grants Campaign in 1971, this C.P.G.B. influence also entailed participation in political campaigns.<sup>48</sup> These included the anti-apartheid campaign against the Springbok tours of 1971 and 1972, the campaign against the Industrial Relations Bill in 1970 and 1971, and support for the Miner's strike of 1972.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, in 1969 an N.U.S. Executive member was given responsibility for liaison with trade unions and in November 1970 a Commission was elected 'to consider all the



implications of the principle of intent of affiliation of the N.U.S. to the T.U.C., and to investigate ways in which closer links could be forged between students and trade unionists at local, regional and national levels on both a formal and an informal basis'.<sup>50</sup>

In 1970, however, I.S. and I.M.G. had renewed their interest in the N.U.S.. Between 1968 and 1970, having dismissed the importance of the N.U.S. to the student movement, both organisations had attempted to use the R.S.S.F. (see below), the anti-Vietnam War campaign, and their activities in Students' Unions to subordinate the student movement to their revolutionary aims. Having failed, they turned to the newly radical N.U.S. in 1970, and proceeded to challenge the C.P.G.B. for control of the Union. The struggle reached its peak during the Autonomy Campaign of 1971 to 1972, when the government sought to introduce legislation to prevent political campaigns by Students' Unions, and to control the funding of Students' Unions so that they could not fund political campaigns by students or other groups. During that campaign both I.S. and I.M.G. were instrumental in the formation of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Student Unions (L.C.D.S.U.) which, from its creation in November 1971, challenged the C.P.G.B. controlled N.U.S. campaign.<sup>51</sup> While calling for a more militant opposition to the Government's plans to control Students' Unions, the L.C.D.S.U. vehemently, and sometimes violently, opposed the campaign methods of the N.U.S, which included the use of national demonstrations in Birmingham and London on 17 November 1971, a national day of protest on 8 December 1971, and a mass demonstration in London on 23 January 1972.<sup>52</sup>

Although the N.U.S. campaign was eventually successful, both against the Government and the L.C.D.S.U., the episode highlights the sectarianism which plagued the far left, and which made it impossible for any one far left organisation to dominate even one part of the student movement. Because of the implications of this for the student movement, and for the subsequent accounts of the history of the student movement, a detailed examination of this phenomenon would seem to be appropriate. That it affected the role which the far left played within the student movement is clear. In October 1968, for example, the *Black Dwarf* lamented that 'the movement is completely fed-up with the sectarianism for which the British left is so notorious. We are fed-up with those who devote more time attacking other socialists than capitalism itself or those who spend most of their time in accusing each other of being "police agents"'.<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps the best example of the damage done by this factionalism is provided by the case of the Revolutionary Student Socialist Federation (R.S.S.F.). When it was founded in June 1968 by a variety of far left organisations, notably I.S. and I.M.G., it was intended as a national co-ordinating body for the 'revolutionary' student movement.<sup>54</sup> Yet from its very beginning it became a battle-ground for factional disputes. These are particularly well illustrated by David Widgery in a chapter entitled 'Make One, Two Three Balls-Ups: The Student Left' in his *The Left in Britain*. Describing the chaos, factionalism, and indulgence in symbolic gestures which the R.S.S.F. Roundhouse Conference of November 1968 descended into, he suggests that 'if several people there weren't on the CIA payroll they deserved to be'.<sup>55</sup> Although it was not until April 1970 that the R.S.S.F. ceased to exist, it is not possible to

identify any time from its creation onward when it was an effective political organisation, mainly because it was paralysed by factional disputes.

Yet the desire to create such an organisation, and indeed, the attitudes of the far left as a whole, were based upon assumptions about the student movement which were fundamentally flawed. Given the transient nature of the student population, the spontaneous and essentially localised nature of campus protests, and the conflicting interests and aims of the various groups and movements within the student movement, it would not have been (and was not) possible for any one far left organisation to control the student movement for revolutionary means. This would still have been the case even if any one far left organisation could achieve hegemony over the others.

Moreover, it was not possible to assume that the student movement was, or had the potential to be, a revolutionary movement. That the far left considered the student movement to have such potential has already been established. Yet in chapter 4, and in this chapter, it has been made clear that the students who participated in protest held a wide variety of political beliefs, and that most students were apathetic about becoming involved in student or national politics for most of the time. It has also become apparent that most students became involved in campus protest for short periods of time (usually the duration of a sit-in) and that most students participated in protest about student and other issues because of feelings of moral outrage rather than revolutionary fervour. The cultural historian, Ian MacDonald, would therefore appear to be accurate in his suggestion that

though the revolutionary Left's calls for 'self-rule' and 'participatory democracy' were timely, its venerable class-war ideology was an anachronism even in 1968...Essentially populist, the Sixties were also essentially non-ideological - socially reformative rather than politically revolutionary. As such the events of 1968 were a kind of street theatre acted out by middle-class radicals too addled by theory to see that the true revolution of the Sixties was taking place, not in the realms of institutional power, but in the minds of ordinary people. The 'masses', whom activists had been taught to regard as the inert material to be moulded to their ends, turned out to be impervious to crude attempts to raise their consciousness or pretentious 'happenings' designed to reveal their 'true desires'. They knew their desires quite well already and were getting on with satisfying them.<sup>56</sup>

This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

As has been suggested, most students were not seeking to overthrow existing forms of authority, but merely to reform them or their policies, and it seems that even if students had been intent upon attaining revolutionary objectives, many in the labour movement, to which the far left wanted to subordinate it, did not want the assistance of students. For instance, in an interview with the *Black Dwarf* in 1970, two shop stewards at the Ford car plant at Dagenham acknowledged the importance of the role played by students in a recent strike, but lamented that 'we haven't really joined forces with students, nurses and teachers in this country, because the workers see students, teachers and nurses as a different bloody class'.<sup>57</sup> Given this, it appears to have been unlikely that students could have provided the spark for a working class revolution (public opinion on the student movement will be discussed further in chapter 6).

Nevertheless, the far left organisations seem to have felt that the student movement did have revolutionary potential, and as a result they seem to have viewed other movements and organisations with connections with the student movement as opponents. This was particularly so with the counter-culture. Again, a detailed examination of this relationship will help to clarify the role of the far left, and of other movements, within the student movement in terms of the far left's perception, as opposed to the reality of, the motivation of most student participation in protest. Before discussing this issue further, however, it would seem appropriate to discuss the meaning of the rather vague term 'counter-culture' or 'underground'. This latter term had been defined as

the name (recalling the resistance movements of World War II) under which in the mid-1960s an emergent movement of hippies and kindred spirits expressed its corporate identity and sense of community in the face of opposition and even organized attack by the Establishment...Its lifestyle, which was reminiscent of the Beats, involved, typically, a tendency towards mysticism, a taste for rock, the use of drugs, ideas of Universal Love expressed partly in terms of sexual permissiveness, and a willingness to adopt communal forms of living without great regard for traditional standards. The movement, whose character is anti-technological, anti-materialist, experimental, and individualist, and is therefore opposed to the tenets, customs, and values of mass society, has its own newspapers, films, plays, music, and art, and its own outlets for disseminating them - facts which lend some plausibility to the Underground's claim to be regarded as a *counter-culture* or an *alternative society*.<sup>58</sup>

Ian MacDonald points to the use of 'mind-expanding' drugs such as marijuana and LSD, the use of which 'exposed modernity's spiritual emptiness, challenged

the “unexamined life” of consumer society. The resulting acid culture of the mid-Sixties was both a mass attempt to transcend the self in the absence of God and an echo of the 19th - century Romantics use of opium to release the imagination from the tiresome constraints of rationalism’.<sup>59</sup> The sociologists Erik Cohen and Nachman Ben-Yehuda have added to this interpretation by suggesting that

rather than seeking to change or revolutionise established society, the hippies dropped out from it. Dropping out was a liberating experience, which was the hippies’ specific goal. The elective order of the hippie movement, however, was a weakly developed one: neither the objective nor the path to self-fulfilment were given strict formulation or made binding upon the adherents to the movement. Rather, each individual was expected to find his or her own way to self-fulfilment; this conception is succinctly expressed in the principle hippie maxim of “doing your own thing”. The movement has thus had an expressly anarchic tendency and has advocated an extreme tolerance and non-interference with others.<sup>60</sup>

By definition, then, the counter-culture did not seek a revolution in society by political means, but rather sought to reject existing society, and to replace the values of existing society with those of an alternative society, i.e., a ‘revolution in the head’.

The counter-culture was therefore seen both as anathema and a threat to the far left, who attacked the counter-culture mercilessly. David Widgery, for example, missed the point of the counter-culture when he argued that ‘hippies in England represent about as powerful a challenge to the state as people who put foreign coins in gas meters’.<sup>61</sup> After all, the counter-culture was not concerned

with the political overthrowing of the state, but with personal revolution. When Frank Zappa was condemned by militant students when he addressed a meeting at the L.S.E. in May 1969, the *Black Dwarf* argued that 'when he comes to the LSE and attacks the methods of the oppressed whether in Vietnam, Berkeley or Harlem then he is clarifying which side of the barricade he is on'.<sup>62</sup> In response, the underground newspaper *It* argued that 'the basic idea of changing society slowly but deliberately because the most thing is to change people's minds not to substitute one set of rules for another was rejected out of hand by militants who mistook Zappa's view for a right-wing attack of the sort they are used to rebutting'.<sup>63</sup>

Yet what role did the counter-culture play within the student movement? Despite *It*'s print-run of 50,000 in 1968, and a small number of 'happenings' at universities, the counter-culture could count upon few followers among students'.<sup>64</sup> Not only did the survey which was carried out at Warwick University in 1994 and 1995 (see chapter 3 for details) indicate that very few students identified with the counter-culture, but that two of the three who did identify with it had taken part in student protest. Moreover, there is little evidence from Students' Union newspapers to suggest that the counter-culture was representative of a significant number of students. Indeed, just as the domination of Union newspapers by the far left was always short-lived, so the domination of such newspapers by followers of the counter-culture was equally temporary.<sup>65</sup>

The followers of the counter-culture also took part in political campaigns, notably those related to C.N.D., the peace movement, and issues related to the counter-culture itself. In an article in *Sanity* in September 1967 entitled 'The

flower people are not really strangers', Mervyn Jones of C.N.D. recognised the link between the anti-technological stance of the counter-culture and C.N.D., and acknowledged the potentially subversive nature of their 'opt-out' protest.<sup>66</sup> Some followers of the counter-culture were involved in the anti-Vietnam War peace campaign, but overt condemnations of the war in the underground press appear to have been rare, and opposition to the war seems to have been mainly at an ideological level, rather than in the form of active political campaigning.<sup>67</sup> More effort was made for issues which were directly related to the underground, such as the 'legalise pot' campaign, and the *Oz* obscenity trial in 1971.<sup>68</sup> Such overtly political gestures were, however, rare. In this sense both the far left's concern over the influence of the counter-culture in the student movement, and any belief that the counter-culture weakened the student movement, were misplaced. Nevertheless, the attitude of the far left toward the counter-culture highlights the left's desire to control the student movement, as well as its belief in its revolutionary potential.

The position of both the far left and the counter-culture within the student movement, moreover, illustrate the suggestion which was made above that, for the majority of students, revolution, whether in 'the head' or in society, was not a motivating influence in their involvement in protest, that this motivation was usually provided by feelings of outrage and the desire to see justice done, and that there were therefore a variety of ways in which participants in student protest viewed authority. Yet while the far left appears to have played an important role in provoking reactions from those in authority which inflamed these feelings of outrage and helped to prompt students to take part in protest, this protest would



not have taken place without the changes in attitudes to authority which will be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 8 May 1968, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Guardian*, 7 March 1968, p. 7. See also *The Times*' 'Students in Revolt' series on 28 May 1968, p. 10, 29 May 1968, p. 10, 30 May 1968, p. 4. Among others, the editorial in the *Daily Telegraph* on 18 October 1968, p. 18 on the L.S.E. sit-in prior to the anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London on 27 October 1968 is also useful, as is the article in the *Daily Telegraph*, 27 January 1969, p. 12, concerning the closure of the L.S.E..

<sup>3</sup> *Listener*, 4 July 1968, p. 2. See also Bernard Levin, *The Pendulum Years* (Sceptre, 1980), pp. 253-272.

<sup>4</sup> See the *Guardian*, 15 March 1967, p. 1, for an article in which Sir Sydney Caine and members of L.S.E. staff, blamed the sit-in at the School upon a left-wing minority and foreign students.

<sup>5</sup> Ronald Fraser, *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt* (Chatto and Windus, 1988). See also Lin Chun, *The British New Left* (Edinburgh University Press, 1993). Tariq Ali, *1968 and After* (Blond and Briggs, 1978) gives a good example of the ways in which the left has perpetuated the myth that the protests of the 1960s were revolutionary in intent.

<sup>6</sup> Avishai Zvi Ehrlich, 'The Leninist Organisations in Britain and the Student Movement 1966-1972' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1981), p. 265. This is an exhaustively detailed work, with comprehensive histories of all of the far left organisations which will be discussed in this chapter, as well as of their involvement in student organisations such as R.S.A., R.S.S.F., and the N.U.S..

<sup>7</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 5 July 1968, p. 1, 15 October 1968, p. 1, 5 July 1968. p. 2. See also appendix 5 for the manifesto of the R.S.S.F.

<sup>8</sup> *Marxist Youth Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1969, p. 15, M.R.C., MSS 149/43.

<sup>9</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 15 October 1968, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, *Black Dwarf*, 27 January 1969, p. 5, for an analysis of what was to be learnt from the Birmingham and Bristol University sit-ins of November and December 1968. See also David Triesman 'Essex', *New Left Review*, 50, 1968, pp. 70-71; Tom Fawthrop, 'Hull', *New Left Review*, 50, 1968, pp. 59-64; 'Manchester, March 1970, 13½ days that shook the University',

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M.R.C., MSS 84; 'LSE', MRC, MSS 152, file 32. The last two titles are I.S. pamphlets. These works were usually overwhelmed by vague and often incomprehensible theory such as the statement in the latter article, to the effect that 'a major factor in the situation was - and to some extent is - the lack any real theoretical perspective on the LSE situation in the IS group itself'.

<sup>11</sup> Ehrlich, *Leninist*, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> Ehrlich, *ibid.*, p. 13. See also John Callaghan, *British Trotskyism: Theory and Practice* (Blackwell, 1984), and David Widgery, *The Left in Britain 1956-68* (Penguin, 1976).

<sup>13</sup> *Beaver*, 23 February 1967, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Concourse*, 7 February 1969, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 8 October 1968, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> E. P. Thompson, *Warwick University Ltd.* (Penguin, 1970). See also Alexander Cockburn and Robin Blackburn (eds), *Student Power* (Penguin, 1969), Tariq Ali, *Street Fighting Years: An Autobiography of the Sixties* (Collins, 1987), and appendix 5 for the R.S.S.F. manifesto, as well as Peter Evans, *The Protest Virus* (Pitman, 1974).

<sup>17</sup> Ehrlich, *Leninism*, p. 82.

<sup>18</sup> For archive material on I.S. at the L.S.E., and the sit-in itself, see M.R.C., MSS 250, the archive of Richard Kuper.

<sup>19</sup> *Union News*, 21 June 1968, p. 1, 28 June 1968, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *New Society*, 30 May 1968, p. 793.

<sup>21</sup> *New Society*, 23 May 1968, p. 755.

<sup>22</sup> Triesman, 'Essex', p. 70.

<sup>23</sup> Fawthrop, 'Hull', p. 61.

<sup>24</sup> *Cambridge Reporter*, Wednesday 14 February 1973, Special No. 12, Vol. CIII, Report of the sit-in in February 1972 and its consequences by the High Steward, p. 23, M.R.C., MSS 326, box 75.

<sup>25</sup> *Beaver*, 3 November 1969, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> Ehrlich, 'Leninism', p. 66.

<sup>27</sup> *Concourse*, 27 November 1970, p. 7.

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- <sup>28</sup> Christopher Booker, *The Neophiliacs: The Revolution in English life in the fifties and sixties* (Pimlico, 1992, first published by Collins, 1969), p. 313. See also M. Sanderson, *The Universities and British Industry 1850-1980* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).
- <sup>29</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 27 January 1969, p. 5.
- <sup>30</sup> See *Manchester Independent*, 3 March 1970, p. 4, for example.
- <sup>31</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 5 July 1968, p. 3, *Marxist Youth Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3, M.R.C., MSS 149, box 4, file 3. See also Cockburn and Blackburn, *Student Power*, and appendix 5 for the manifesto of the R.S.S.F.
- <sup>32</sup> *Concourse*, 8 November 1968, p. 5.
- <sup>33</sup> *Beaver*, 29 January 1969, p. 9. At this time *Beaver* had been taken over by the left at the L.S.E..
- <sup>34</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 7 November 1967, p. 3; 27 November, p. 1; 5 December 1967, p. 3.
- <sup>35</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 20 February 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>36</sup> *Birmingham Sun*, 16 June 1965, p. 1.
- <sup>37</sup> See appendix 2 for the R.S.A. manifesto.
- <sup>38</sup> *Guardian*, 31 March 1967, p. 20. See also M.R.C., MSS 280, boxes 98-102 for details of Council meetings, and box 51/ RS for the correspondence of Geoffrey Martin and his predecessor as President, Bill Savage, on the subject of the R.S.A..
- <sup>39</sup> *Ramparts*, Vol. 5, No. 9, March 1967, pp. 29-51.
- <sup>40</sup> See *Private Eye*, 31 March 1967, p. ?, and 14 April 1967, p. 3.
- <sup>41</sup> See *Report of the Executive Sub-Committee Investigating possible Central Intelligence Agency Subversion of the International Student Conference*, N.U.S., October 1967, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 40. This box contains a number of manuscripts relating to the C.I.A. affair. Although the investigation found that F.I.S.C. had not been a secret service front, it was later argued that Margaret Ramsay, the Secretary of F.I.S.C., and a former associate secretary of I.S.C., was a member of the Foreign office, and had connections with, and was possibly a member of, the British Secret Intelligence Service. See *The Leveller*, February 1976, p. 11. For the R.S.A. attacks on the N.U.S. leadership during the Spring Council see the *Guardian*, 31 March 1967, p. 20.

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<sup>42</sup> *Guardian*, 4 March 1968, p. 16. The 'eight universities' refers to protests, including sit-ins at the L.S.E., and the Universities of Aston, Birmingham, Leicester, Manchester, Oxford, Southampton, Essex, and York.

<sup>43</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 6 February 1968, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 5 March 1968, p. 4. See also the *Birmingham Sun*, 16 November 1966, p. 6, *Union News*, 14 October 1966, p. 1, and *Union News*, 3 February 1967, pp. 1-2.

<sup>45</sup> *Guardian*, 24 October 1968, p. 18, *The Times*, 24 October 1968, p. 1. For an indication of the nature of the dissent within the Union at the time see 'The National Union of Students: The problems that face us', March 1969, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 142/MI, file 9.

<sup>46</sup> For details of the Conference see M.R.C., MSS 280, box 89, file 1. Jack Straw was active in the Students' Union of Leeds University from 1965 to 1969 and was President of that Union from 1967 to 1968. See *Union News* over that period for his role in the Union at Leeds, particularly with regard to the sit-in of June 1968. See 'Granada Guildhall Lecture: "Student Participation in Higher Education: Education for Democracy and Technology" by Mr. Jack Straw, 6 October 1969', M.R.C., MSS 280, box 138/MI, file 6, for his views while he was President of the N.U.S..

<sup>47</sup> Digby Jacks, *Student Politics and Higher Education* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1975).

<sup>48</sup> For details of the Grants Campaign see M.R.C., MSS 280, box 47/ GR.

<sup>49</sup> Conference resolutions on these issues are at M.R.C., MSS 280, box 87.

<sup>50</sup> *N.U.S. - T.U.C. Commission, an interim report, Lancaster Conference 1971*, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 55/ TU, file 3, and *Final Report of the N.U.S. Commission on Trade Unions, November Conference 1971*, M.R.C., MSS 280, box 55/ TU, file 1. The plan to affiliate with the T.U.C. was abandoned following the latter report, when it was made clear that the financial burden would be too great, and that the T.U.C. would not recognise the N.U.S. as a trade union.

<sup>51</sup> See M.R.C., MSS 280, box 50/AC, file 2 for the L.C.D.S.U. manifesto. The box contains a large quantity of material on the N.U.S. Autonomy Campaign, including publicity for the N.U.S. case and for demonstrations. It also includes some correspondence with the government, notably a particularly patronising, but nonetheless revealing letter from Margaret Thatcher. As Secretary

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of State for Education at the time, she was responsible for the attempted implementation of the government's controls on Students' Unions.

<sup>52</sup> The L.C.D.S.U. manifesto included opposition to all negotiations, a refusal to 'collaborate with college authorities', and a proposal for 'unconditional but not uncritical support to both wings of the I.R.A. in their struggle against the armed forces of British Imperialism'. The struggle for control of the N.U.S. was fierce, and at the N.U.S. Conference of January 1972, the L.C.D.S.U. had considerable success. One of the results of this was that, from January to April 1972, the latter resolution was adopted as N.U.S. policy. For the demonstrations see *Redbrick*, 24 November 1971, p. 1, *Campus*, 3 December 1971, p. 1, *Guild Gazette*, 18 January 1972, p. 2, and *Campus*, 28 January 1972, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 27 October 1968, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> See appendix 5 for the R.S.S.F. manifesto. See also the R.S.S.F. pamphlet 'Three Broad Areas of Student Struggle', M.R.C., MSS 152, file 32.

<sup>55</sup> Widgery, *Left*, p. 315.

<sup>56</sup> Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' records and the Sixties* (Pimlico, 1995), pp. 24-25.

<sup>57</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 30 January 1968, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Alan Bullock, Oliver Stallybrass, and Stephen Trombley (eds), *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (Fontana, 1988), p. 883. For an exhaustive study of the hippie movement in Britain, as well as a discussion of the relationship of the far left with the counter culture, see Howard Geoffrey Horne, 'Hippies: A study in the Sociology of Knowledge' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 1982).

<sup>59</sup> MacDonald, *Revolution*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>60</sup> Erik Cohen and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, 'Counter-Cultural Movements and Totalitarian Democracy', *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 57, No. 4, Fall 1987, p. 381. See also J. Green, *Days in the Life: Voices from the English Underground* (Heinemann, 1988), T. Roszak, *The Making of a Counter-culture* (Faber and Faber, 1970), and Richard Neville, *Playpower* (Paladin, 1970). Also

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informative are Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception* (Chatto and Windus, 1956), and Jim Haynes, *Thanks for coming* (Faber, 1984).

<sup>61</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 20 February 1970, p. 11. Ironically, Widgery later became an editor of the underground newspaper *Oz*.

<sup>62</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 14 June 1969, p. 10.

<sup>63</sup> *It*, 13-25 June 1969, p. 9. See also the 'Open letter to John Lennon' in *Black Dwarf*, 27 October 1968, p. 2, attacking the pacifist sentiments of Lennon's 'Revolution'. See *Black Dwarf*, 10 January 1969, p. 2 for Lennon's biting reply.

<sup>64</sup> Caute, *Sixty-eight*, p. 46. Yoko Ono held a 'be-in' at Cannon Hill Park in Birmingham in October 1967 which was mainly attended by students from Birmingham University. See *Redbrick*, 18 October 1967, p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> In 1970 both *Ripple* at Leicester University, and *Broadsheet* at Cardiff, both underwent temporary transformations into imitations of *Oz*. This included the use of cartoons and pornography for the majority of the content.

<sup>66</sup> *Sanity*, September 1967, p. 8, M.R.C., MSS 181. See also Green, *Days in the Life*, pp. 5-6, and pp. 23-26.

<sup>67</sup> See *Oz*, 10 March 1968, p. 1. The front cover shows the famous photograph of Brigadier-General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, the head of the South Vietnamese police, summarily executing a Viet Cong prisoner. The caption underneath reads 'The Great Society blows another mind'. See chapter 7 for further discussion of this photograph.

<sup>68</sup> See *Oz* 13, p. 1, for an advert for the 'Legalise Pot Rally, Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, Sunday 7 July'. For the Obscenity trial see Richard Neville, *Hippie, Hippie Shake* (Bloomsbury, 1995).

## CHAPTER 5

### THE PRE-CONDITIONS FOR PROTEST



It has been established in previous chapters that consistent and widespread student protest was a new phenomenon of the 1960s. The need to account for this has been a central theme in those chapters, and as part of that process it has been found that, for the majority of students, their participation in protest was not the result of a revolutionary outlook, or their class origins, etc.. In this chapter an attempt will be made to provide some explanation for the occurrence of student protest in the 1960s by examining the preconditions which were necessary for students to have been both able and willing to engage in protest. Among these pre-conditions, only the analysis of the changes in attitudes to authority adequately accounts for students willingness to take part in protest activities.

It is perhaps tempting, for example, to attempt to explain student protest in the light of the peculiarities of student life. After all, it might seem logical to suggest that there were aspects of student life which made it easier for students to engage in protest, while other social groups did not engage in such activities. As a result it might be argued that these considerations could provide an insight into the reasons for the occurrence of student protest. It was noted in the chapter 2, for instance, that during the 1960s students began to receive state grants, that the majority of students lived away from the parental home, either in lodgings or halls of residence, and that Students' Unions provided students with an organised social and political forum. Indeed, with the expansion of student numbers following the Robbins Report, attendance at university became one of the principle means of leaving the parental home for a large and growing number of young people. Unlike other groups of young people, then, students were concentrated in large numbers in a small geographical area (i.e., the university

campus), with few parental controls, including financial constraints, and with an established representative body and political groups. They were also free from the restrictions upon time and behaviour which were experienced by other young people who worked in an industrial environment. For much of the 1960s, moreover, students had little to fear from becoming involved in protest at universities: the meeting of the Disciplinary Board at the L.S.E. in 1966 and 1967 was the first time that the Board had met since 1951, and it was not until 1969 and the years immediately after this date that universities began to use punitive measures, including recourse to the law, against students who took part in protests.<sup>1</sup> Yet these conditions had existed before the 1960s: state grants were introduced because most students received some form of state funding anyway, while student residence away from the parental home, and the existence of Students' Unions, were not new developments. It may be necessary to acknowledge that these considerations were important in making it possible for students to engage in protest, and that they made it more likely that students would be able to become involved in, and organise, mass protest than other groups of young people, but they do not explain the origins and the timing of these protests.

The viewpoint which relies upon a consideration of the differences or even the isolation of student life from the rest of society, is mirrored by the line of argument of the philosopher Herbert Marcuse with regard to the isolation of the rest of society from the 'sane' environment of student life. In the 1960s Marcuse was dubbed 'the father of the student revolution', and as such it would perhaps be of value to quote him at length. He argued that in the modern

industrial society, where freedom from want of the basic necessities for survival was possible for the majority of individuals, 'non-conformity within the system appears to be socially useless, and the more so when it entails tangible economic and political disadvantages and threatens the smooth operation of the whole'. The individual was therefore trapped in an economic system where basic human needs had been fulfilled, and where the economy was geared to persuading the individual of his or her need for non-essential satisfactions, so that

its productivity and efficiency, its capacity to increase and spread comforts, to turn waste into need, and destruction into construction, the extent to which this civilization transforms the object world into an extension of man's mind and body makes the very notion of alienation questionable. The people recognise themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed, and social control is anchored in the new needs which it has produced.

The result of this was that 'economic freedom would mean freedom *from* the daily struggle for existence, from earning a living. Political freedom would mean liberation of the individuals *from* politics over which they have no effective control. Similarly, intellectual freedom would mean the restoration of individual thought now absorbed by mass consumption and indoctrination'.<sup>2</sup> This, according to Marcuse, was the role which was played by the student movement. In the light of the inactivity of the working class as a result of the developments which were discussed above,

the development of consciousness, the development of real knowledge of what is going on and what can be done about it, falls upon groups which by virtue of their education have learned to think, have become acquainted with the facts, and at the same time, precisely because of this knowledge, suffer from the established conditions. That is the role of the student. They are one of the few groups that are not integrated into - or if you want a stronger term, infested or infected by - the system.<sup>3</sup>

It may be, however, that students' freedom from economic restraints, and their position in a freely critical environment, made them more likely than other groups to engage in protest of such a morally based nature as, for example, the anti-Vietnam War campaign, but Marcuse's theories appear to assume a revolutionary intent and world view on the part of students which, as has been noted, was not representative of the majority. Moreover, these theories do not provide an explanation for the cause of student protest at that particular time. Yet this is not to dismiss these theories out of hand, nor to deny the importance of economic and social changes, as will be found in the discussions upon student attitudes to authority which will take place below.

Indeed, it is in an analysis of the changes in attitudes to authority that the key to the understanding of the origins of student protest in the 1960s is located. In the period previous to the 1960s, protest by students, and therefore challenges to authority, were rare. Students did not claim a place in the academic community, nor did they regularly challenge the legitimacy of university or governmental authority. It was noted in chapter 1 that for many graduates of the 1940s and the 1950s, the mass student protest of the 1960s would have been unthinkable when they had been students. The first challenges to this apparent

conformity in youthful deference to authority were the protests which were carried out by C.N.D. from 1958 onwards, as was also noted in chapter 1. Thus, Frank Parkin has argued that, with regard to C.N.D., 'much of the movement's appeal for the young did derive from the anti-adult, anti-authoritarian character which the Campaign frequently assumed'. The policies of those in government were challenged in a mass movement for the first time in the post-war period, predominantly by the young. As Frank Parkin has continued, 'the Bomb could be, and was easily held up as a symbol of the older generation's moral bankruptcy, the supreme example of adult wickedness and folly. In refusing to condone the terrible new weapon the young could demonstrate their own political purity and high moral purpose and contrast these with the apparently less altruistic and less moral attitudes of their seniors'.<sup>4</sup>

In the 1960s, this challenge to authority, and with it a challenge to accepted norms of behaviour and deference, continued. Events such as the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962, and the Profumo affair in 1963, damaged the credibility of the claim by those in authority to represent the moral high ground, and to have their decisions accepted unquestioningly. This credibility had already been damaged by the Suez crisis in 1956, about which Christopher Booker has argued that 'deep in the national psyche...was the knowledge that a very real watershed had been passed. Attitudes to the outside world and to authority, the relations between class and class, England's fundamental view of herself...had been irreparably damaged. The dam had burst'.<sup>5</sup> Episodes such as the Profumo affair contributed to this process, in which a new acceptability of challenging the legitimacy of the decisions of those in authority was established, such as that of

the anti-establishment satire of the ground-breaking television programme *That was the week that was*, in 1962 and 1963. This is not to suggest that this programme, and the attitudes to deference to authority which informed it, were without opposition among the British public, but it is perhaps notable that the programme had enough followers for the BBC to feel that it would have been unfair on the Conservative government to allow it to continue broadcasts during the 1964 General Election. Perhaps significantly, moreover, National Service, with its inherent attempt to instil an unquestioning respect for authority, ended in December 1960. Indeed, Trevor Royle, in his study of National Service, has provided an argument which is worth quoting at length because of its relevance to this chapter. He has argued that

*in the first ten or so years after the war, society had changed little and the immense effort to put Britain back on its feet bred a rough kind of solidarity. Those same fathers and sons united by their National Service also shared the same dress, appearance and tastes. Most young men still aped their elders, and it was not until the pop revolution of the late 1950s that they discovered leisure patterns which reflected their young independence. George Melly has called the movement a 'revolt into style', and with it came radical changes in dress, behaviour and opinion: for many young people growing up in the early 1960s it was almost as if a safety valve had been released. In this perspective, the freedom from conscription was also one of the reasons for the rapidly mushrooming youth culture.<sup>6</sup>*

It may be notable, therefore, that the comments which were made by one onlooker during a student anti-Vietnam War demonstration in Liverpool in 1969,

that 'I fought for the likes of you in the last war - a good dose in the army would do you lot good', appears to have been a common response to student protest.<sup>7</sup>

For students, arguably the greatest change in their position within education, and within wider society in the 1960s, was the rapid expansion in their numbers which took place after the *Robbins Report*, and an investigation into the impact of this expansion will also necessitate an examination of changes in attitudes to authority among students in the 1960s. Indeed, the post-Robbins expansion in student numbers was identified by many contemporary commentators as the cause of student protest in the 1960s. In *The Times* in May 1968, for example, it was suggested that 'the student population of the world has more than doubled in the past 10 years. This explosive statistic goes a long way towards explaining the rise of student power'.<sup>8</sup> In the same month the *Spectator* argued that 'when it comes to the underlying causes of the present discontents...it looks as if much of the trouble stems from the speed at which expansion has taken place and the stresses and strains which this has caused'. With university facilities and staffing levels supposedly unable to keep pace with the growth in student numbers, it was argued that 'now that higher education has become a 'right' instead of a privilege, people who go up to university expecting something wonderful are unwilling to accept disappointment without making a fuss'.<sup>9</sup> In March of the same year, the *Spectator* had also argued that 'it was not foreseen that the swift expansion of the university population would lead to the radical alteration in the academic climate which now shows itself up and down the country in the form of 'student unrest''.<sup>10</sup> The *Marxist Youth Journal* also suggested that 'the growing conflict between students and junior lecturers on the

one hand and College Authorities on the other...has its roots in the Governments' policies', and that these policies had amounted only to 'increased student numbers'.<sup>11</sup>

Yet the expansion in student numbers does not seem to have caused student protest. It was noted in chapter 1 that staff-student ratios kept pace with the rate of expansion, while there were also few instances where inadequate facilities were a direct cause of protest: the sit-ins at Warwick University in February 1970 over the lack of a Students' Union building provide perhaps the clearest examples.<sup>12</sup> There were protests which were related to students' accommodation, but these were usually aimed at the rules which were enforced in halls of residence rather than at the quality or quantity of the facilities which were provided by individual universities.

These protests therefore provide an insight into the changing position of young people in society, and the impact of these changes upon attitudes to authority and norms of behaviour. The nature of the rules which were enforced in halls of residence is illustrated by a survey of the women's halls at ten universities and colleges, which was carried out by the Exeter University student newspaper, the *South Westerner*, in 1959. Female students had to return to their accommodation by midnight at Cambridge, by 10.00 pm at Newcastle, and by 10.30 pm at University College Cardiff. Fines were 'imposed on latecomers strictly at Leeds and Newcastle regardless of a legitimate excuse', while 'some colleges require the parents' written consent for late functions'. At University College Cardiff, female students were allowed to have male visitors in their rooms only on Saturdays from 2.00 pm to 6.30 pm, and on Sundays from 2.00



pm to 7.00 pm, 'and first and second year students must entertain in groups'. At Leeds University, which was described as having a 'liberal attitude', 'men are allowed in from 2 pm to dinner time on weekdays and from 2 pm to 10 pm on Saturdays and Sundays'. The authors of the survey concluded that 'it is surely time that a radical change took place in the attitude of the majority of authorities towards students. Whether it is to be regretted or not, we are not living in the Victorian Age, although it appears that a great many wardens and college authorities are'.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, it was only irregularly that such restrictions provoked protests by students in the 1950s and early 1960s, so that by the mid-1960s the regulations in the halls of most universities were still intact: in 1965 Liverpool University banned female students from being out of their accommodation after midnight.<sup>14</sup>

The justification for these rules was that universities acted *in loco parentis*, although by the mid-1960s this position was being challenged. In 1965 the government established a Committee, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Justice Latey, to consider the desirability of a change in the existing legal age of majority which then stood at 21 years of age. The conclusions of the Committee, which were published in its report in July 1967, provide valuable information for the understanding of the changing position of young people in society, and will therefore be quoted at length. The Committee argued that

the secluded life of the student, schoolchild or undergraduate of the post-war period bears scant resemblance to that of his counterpart today. Today's youngster is far more likely to have taken part-time work, to read newspapers regularly and to have had his horizon

broadened by travel and television; he is likely to have spent a lot more time out and about with his own contemporaries. He is also much more likely to resent the attempts of his institute of further education to control what he regards as his private life.

The Committee felt, therefore, that while the *in loco parentis* position of universities was 'based on the assumption that those between 18 and 21 need someone to look after them...we have been convinced that they do not'. This was used to add weight to the Committee's recommendation that the age of majority should be reduced to 18.<sup>15</sup> This was carried out on 1 January 1970, when the voting age was also reduced to 18. The attitudes of students also seem to indicate an opposition to the *in loco parentis* position of universities. In March 1968, for example, one Cambridge University student stated that 'what we object to is our sub-adult status' and that 'my parents have no responsibility for me...so why should the college'.<sup>16</sup> In 1969, a survey of 529 students at Leeds University found that 70 per cent were opposed to the University's position of *in loco parentis*, while 19 per cent agreed with it, and 11 per cent did not know.<sup>17</sup>

Both as a result, and as examples of, this opposition to the 'sub-adult' status of students, students at a number of universities protested against the restrictions which remained in halls of residence. At Liverpool University in 1965, for example, female students held three mass meetings in order to demand an end to restrictions on the time which they could spend away from their hall, and to extend 'man hours'. They also sent a petition to the University Senate which had the support of three quarters of all female students at the University.<sup>18</sup> At Keele University in January 1968, students threatened 'militant action' in

response to attempts by the University to increase the restrictions on visiting hours in halls and in off-campus accommodation. The students were successful in gaining a relaxation of the restrictions which were placed upon visiting hours, but the University still proposed to implement rules against 'fornication'.<sup>19</sup> Sit-ins against rules, particularly against those governing visiting hours between the sexes, also took place at Liverpool and Manchester Universities in 1969.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the *Guardian* noted in May 1968, in reference to the recent sit-in at Essex University, that 'worries about the designs of new residential towers, it was discovered, were not nearly so important as students' yearning for "democracy"...The new generation of students is demanding equal rights with the rest of the population as a matter of course'.<sup>21</sup> Students were therefore challenging the previously accepted position in society and in universities which they had held, as well as norms of acceptable behaviour (both in terms of participation in protest and sexual relationships) which 18 to 21 year old members of society could engage in without interference from anyone else.<sup>22</sup> Protests about rules in accommodation were therefore linked to those about students' demands for representation in university governments, as well those against issues such as apartheid or the Vietnam War, in that young people demanded that their opinion should be taken into account.

Does this, then, highlight a form of group identity among students, or among young people in general, in the 1960s? Indeed, it has been suggested that the L.S.E. sit-in of March 1967 was 'a microcosmic scene, played out in one university, of the whole drama of the young, impatient generation and tradition-defending age'.<sup>23</sup> It was the case that some students did travel to other

universities in order to assist and show solidarity with, those students who were engaged in protest against their university authorities: twelve Manchester University students were among the 102 students who were arbitrarily suspended at the L.S.E. in March 1967, for example.<sup>24</sup> Yet most of those students who travelled to sit-ins at other universities than their own, appear to have been supporters of the far left whose group identity seems to have been more closely related to revolutionary politics and class struggle rather than generational conflict. Moreover, the term 'student power' may have been the subject of teach-ins and articles in student newspapers, and it may have been defined by David Adelstein, who had been President of the Students' Union at the L.S.E. in 1967, as 'absolute control - and that means teachers as well - over everything'. Yet the Gallup Poll which was carried out at Cambridge and Sussex Universities in May 1968 found that the term

is dismissed as "meaningless" by 22 per cent of Cambridge undergraduates and by 39 per cent of Sussex undergraduates. Only 10 per cent at Cambridge and 14 per cent at Sussex define it in political terms as a force concerned to give students more say in political affairs. To the majority at Cambridge, 68 per cent, and to the largest group in Sussex, 47 per cent, "Student power" is thought to have limited objectives confined to the sphere of university affairs; that is, to give students more say in the administrative and academic life of their universities and to promote closer consultation between students and professorial staff.<sup>25</sup>

This is hardly indicative of student protest being caused by a single-minded group identity or by conformity. Indeed, conformity does not seem to have

provided a motivation for involvement in protest for many students. The editor of the Liverpool University *Guild Gazette*, writing in October 1968, did lament that in the previous academic year ‘there were revolutionary goings-on everywhere. It was all happening - all over England. Except Liverpool’, but similar statements were rare.<sup>26</sup> Although they may seem to suggest that some student protest took the form of protest for its own sake, in order to fit in with the trends at other universities, or in order to enjoy the excitement of protest, this does not appear to have been the case. While it may be possible to speculate that some students could have been willing to become involved in protest because it was happening across the country at the time, or because of the excitement of confronting those in authority, student protest can only be understood as the expression of discontent, by ordinary people, about specific issues which were important to them. Moreover, most students protested irregularly and rarely, which further suggests that group identity and conformity were not motivating influences for most student protesters. The relevance of a ‘youth’ group identity, of a generation gap and generational conflict as a result, will be discussed later in this chapter.

Nonetheless, this rejection of the relevance of a possible student group identity as a motivating factor is not inconsistent with the suggestion that student protest was both the result, and an expression of, changes in the perception of young people in the 1960s with regard to their position in society, and in their attitudes to authority. In order to clarify this suggestion further, it would perhaps be beneficial to examine the nature of these changes by outlining their origins.

Arguably the key factor in providing the conditions in which these changes in attitude could take place was the economic prosperity of the post-war

period. Alternative arguments have included the view that ‘scientific innovations too potent to resist’, combined with the abandonment of ‘a Christian world of postponed pleasure’, resulted in the replacement of ‘a hierarchical social unity in which each “knew his place” for the personal rewards of a modern meritocracy’.<sup>27</sup> This may be a valid approach, but it still relies upon the assumption that such changes took place amid a background of economic prosperity. Initially, this would seem to be a reversal of the argument of Herbert Marcuse, which was outlined above, that prosperity inhibited expressions of discontent. Yet in many respects, at least for some young people, and for students in particular, the post-war prosperity may have provided the freedom from the enslaving aspects of the capitalist economy which Marcuse had hoped for. This is not intended to represent praise for the supposed ‘success’ of the capitalist system, or a condemnation of the left; that is not the aim of this investigation. Indeed, it is perhaps ironic that the capitalist development which the left condemned, and which the right encouraged, could have been a key factor in creating the conditions which made protest possible, i.e., the very protest which the left supported, and the right condemned.

It seems, then, that one of the greatest changes in the lifestyles of many young people in Britain in the late 1950s and early 1960s was their increased disposable income. Consumer expenditure in post-war Britain as a whole rose from £7,273 million in 1946 to £13,821 million in 1956, and to £30,620 million in 1970. Between 1946 and 1960, expenditure on durable goods such as furniture and electrical products rose from £287 million to £847 million, and reached £1,018 million in 1965.<sup>28</sup> Young people had an unprecedented access to paid

'employment, with the result that, as Ronald Fraser has noted 'although teenagers in Britain...disposed of only 5 per cent of total consumer spending per annum, that still totalled over £850 million in 1960; and with it they bought more than 40 per cent of record players, nearly one-third of cosmetics and toiletries, 28 per cent of cinema admissions, and so on'.<sup>29</sup> By the 1960s young people represented a powerful consumer interest group, and were targeted as a market for products which were aimed specifically at them, notably forms of entertainment and clothing. The position of young people in society had therefore changed: for many young people the financial dependence upon parents and other members of older generations, which had been the experience of previous generations, was greatly reduced or ended entirely. This included many students who received state grants from the early 1960s onward. Moreover, for many of those who were still financially dependent upon parents, many of those parents had more disposable income to spend on their children. As a result, young people were able to demand the right to their own ability to express themselves, the right to their own opinions, and to create or to buy forms of cultural expression which reflected their own views and tastes. It was therefore difficult to maintain that young people should know their place in the established order of deference. Unlike previous generations, they no longer had to behave, or even dress, like their parents, and could instead choose to partake of, or contribute to the commercial products of a youth culture, such as music, films, forms of dress, etc., which actively encouraged them to rebel against such established norms.<sup>30</sup>

A note of caution should be added here, however, concerning the nature of the role of the new commercial youth culture of the 1960s with regard to the

student movement. Although it would perhaps be tempting to identify the new commercial expressions of youth culture as the cause of the change in attitudes to authority, and therefore of student protest, such a standpoint would be mistaken. One contemporary commentator, for example, argued of the student movement that 'from being a mood of disaffection bursting out into civic disturbance under the influence of the mass-media of pop culture, it has been transformed, with the help of an ideology evolved largely by refugee sociologists, into a movement that justifies itself in grandiose and idealistic terms'.<sup>31</sup> It may have been the case that many of the commercially available expressions of youth culture challenged authority, as well established modes of behaviour and dress, but it can not be suggested that the anti-establishment, and even erotic and openly sexual musical performances of groups such as the Rolling Stones, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, or the Who, caused student protest.<sup>32</sup> Not only has the impact of these expressions of youthful rebellion been impossible to measure, but attempts to assert their importance have usually resulted in over-simplistic theories which have not been based upon a balanced appraisal. For example, Ian MacDonald, in his examination of the role of the Beatles in 1960s popular culture, has suggested that 'Tomorrow never knows', which was released in August 1966 as part of the *Revolver* album, 'introduced LSD and [Timothy] Leary's psychedelic revolution to the young of the western world, becoming one of the most socially influential records The Beatles ever made'.<sup>33</sup> This assertion is made confidently, yet without reference to any evidence, without any consideration of any alternative sources of information for young people, or indeed without any assessment of the impact of LSD or psychedelia upon the youth of Britain in the 1960s. Moreover, it also



assumes that those listening to the record would have interpreted it in a single way, which would appear to be an over-simplistic expectation even with mainstream music, whereas this particular piece of music was both experimental and complex. A further example is provided by John Lennon's biographer, Ray Coleman, who claimed that in 1968, 'with Bob Dylan in seclusion, the demonstrators looked to the Beatles and the Rolling Stones for guidance and leadership'.<sup>34</sup> Not only does this statement fail to understand the nature of the demonstrations taking place, but it is not based upon any investigative research.

Instead, the commercial youth culture can be seen as a reflection of the changes which had been made in the everyday lives of ordinary people, and in this context, it makes it easier to understand the changes in the attitudes of young people which made many of them willing to take part in protest. The cultural historian Paul Friedlander, in his *Rock and Roll: A Social History*, has therefore argued that although 'critics have ascribed a cause-and-effect relationship, charging that lyrics incite...youth to rebel against their parents and society' and that 'rock music supporters have applauded the genre's rebellious and its sometimes politically inflammatory lyrics, crediting them with causing cultural, political, and even "revolutionary" change', it should be noted that 'both of these viewpoints fail to account for a number of important variables. First, finding meaning in a popular song is not as simple as interpreting lyrics - if you can understand them in the first place'. He suggests that 'words carry different meanings for different people' and that 'it is difficult, if not impossible, to prove that a cause-and-effect relationship exists between rock music lyrics and group or individual behaviours. Popular music is a reflection of the society and culture

from which it emanates'.<sup>35</sup> It is important to note, then, that not only are those who produce music, for example, a part of wider society and that their work reflects their life experience and social context, but also that they need a market or audience for their work. It may be likely that protest can exist without the corresponding existence of a rebellious culture which is aimed at or produced by the group which is protesting. It is unlikely, however, that such a rebellious culture could exist in commercial form without a market for its works. In the 1960s, then, rebellious music reflected (often in an exaggerated and aggressive way) rather than caused the changes which ordinary people were making in their lifestyles, in their expectations, in their attitudes, and therefore in wider society. It is thus not contradictory to note that the survey which was conducted at Warwick University in 1994 and 1995 found that many former student protesters had not listened to this rebellious music, but rather had listened to classical music or jazz.<sup>36</sup>

These observations are perhaps made clearer when the youth culture of the 1950s is considered. It has been argued by the sociologist Simon Frith that 'teenager is a fifties concept, youth and youth culture come from the sixties'.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Ian Campbell, who was a youthful member of C.N.D. in the 1950s, has recalled that

in the 1950s teenagers had hardly been invented. The seeds of today's diverse harvest were only being sown and counter-cultures were unobtrusive. Still scarred by National Service army conditioning we tended to sport short-back-and-sides haircuts with sports coats and flannels; the jeans fad had not yet flourished; neither had the pop industry as we know it today...Apart from the odd novelty, such as a tongue twister or a comic song in

the music hall tradition, songs were invariably about love, or rather a peculiarly wholesome and sexless variety of romance'.<sup>38</sup>

If the popular youth music of the period, including that of Pat Boone, Frankie Lane, Bobby Darin, Doris Day, Nat 'King' Cole, and Cliff Richard, was reflective of popular attitudes to authority and norms of behaviour, it is perhaps not a co-incidence that the 1950s was not a decade in which young people engaged in protest, at least until the foundation of C.N.D. in 1958. Indeed, the rebellious 'rock n' roll' of Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry and Little Richard may have been commercially successful, but such music was the exception rather than the rule, and was the vanguard of the developments in the 1960s.<sup>39</sup>

It was in the 1960s that financial independence allowed young people the ability to express themselves culturally (in this sense it is perhaps notable that the Beatles were the first group of young people to reject the Tin Pan Alley control over their work, and to write and perform their own material), as well as the freedom to raise their expectations of life and of society. As a result, they challenged the position of deference, and supposed inferiority in wisdom to the older generation, which had previously prevailed. Both the new youth culture of the 1960s, and student protest, were examples of, and were caused by, the changes in attitudes to authority and to norms of acceptable behaviour, which this 'elevation' in the position of young people in society had prompted. For the first time, many young people demanded to be treated as the equals of those who were older than them; in some cases, as will be suggested below, they even argued that they possessed a moral superiority to the older generation. Thus Richard Taylor

has suggested that C.N.D. 'was the first time in post-war Britain that a new generation had rejected the politics and questioned the morality of its elders...All this was, of course, part of a much wider growth of youth culture, resulting primarily from the new economic independence in the post-war era of full employment'.<sup>40</sup>

Within the context of student protest, this desire to be treated as equals, and to have their opinions considered within the decision making processes of university and national governments, was a fundamental change in young peoples' attitudes toward their status in society. For the first time, large numbers of students demanded to be considered within the academic community, and to have access to the democratic university system which this position would command. Also for the first time, students organised and took part in mass protest over governmental policy in an attempt to influence that governmental policy, whether over Vietnam, apartheid, students' union autonomy, or grants. These protests were therefore linked to the desire for treatment as adults within a democratic system and which can be exemplified by the objections to the age of majority and voting age at 21, and the *in loco parentis* status of universities. Students were no longer willing to ignore what they perceived as arbitrary and undemocratic treatment from those in authority, and as a result they engaged in protest, thus challenging the legitimacy of that authority. One student argued in April 1968 that 'as far as the universities are concerned, we want them run on a completely democratic basis. We want them run on the assumption that every member of a university is an adult and capable of participating in its affairs'. Another student stated that 'if you are being educated you become intellectually

free and you cannot be expected blindly to accept authority. It is a question of exerting the right to control one's own life, to have a say if you like'.<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, as was noted in chapter 3, students appear to have protested on altruistic grounds, and to have attempted to claim the moral high ground during protests, to the extent that some rejected what they seem to have identified as the bankrupt morality and hollow ideals of the older generation. One student wrote to *the Daily Mirror* that 'you educated us in our millions to standards higher than ever known before; you brought us up in living standards undreamed of a century ago - and yet you do not understand why we protest, rebel and criticise a world which gave us so much...Look around you and see the world which we have inherited from you'. He went on to highlight a number of issues, including the Vietnam War, mass starvation in India, governmental oppression around the world, and the use of science for military purposes. He concluded that 'in short, you promised us the world and left us instead with a bloody corrupt mess. I have seen the world led to the brink of total destruction by short-minded, senile, bigoted men. I am twenty years old. Do you wonder I am angry?'.<sup>42</sup> Another student, at Manchester University, wrote in 1969 that the Vice Chancellor of the University, Sir William Mansfield Cooper,

is now part of the establishment, part of the establishment that tacitly supports the brutal massacres in Vietnam and Biafra, [*sic*] he would, of course, never pick up a gun and kill someone himself, but he will maintain the graduate training system that is linked to "national well-being": the same national well-being that depends upon arms sales to Nigeria, on the trading of support for the Americans in Vietnam for enormous loans, and on the economic support for apartheid in South Africa.<sup>43</sup>

A letter to the *Spectator* in April 1968, from a student at the Royal Free Hospital, attacked an article which 'criticises a generation which feels bound to act on the impulse of youth and idealism'.<sup>44</sup> Such opinions were noted by a number of contemporary observers, such as Sir Edward Boyle, a former Conservative Minister for Education, who argued in 1969 that 'for many young people...their sense of the gap between the world as it is and the world as it ought to be has come to be felt as almost literally intolerable'.<sup>45</sup>

Some observers even identified a generation gap which had led to generational conflict in the form of protest, but this appears to be a misinterpretation of students' attitudes, and the group identity of young people. For example, it was noted in the *Guardian* in March 1968 that 'even Professor Asa Briggs, vice-chancellor of Sussex University, has suggested that there is "a possibility of perpetual conflict between the student age group and other age groups". There is, he believes, a dissatisfaction with authority and "a lot of general malaise, not very clearly defined"'.<sup>46</sup> The cultural theorist, Theodore Roszak, even argued that 'it would be of interest in its own right that the age-old process of generational disaffiliation should now be transformed into a major lever of radical social change', and that 'the young stand forth so prominently because they act against a background of nearly pathological passivity on the part of the adult generation. It would only be by reducing our conception of citizenship to absolute zero that we could get our senior generation off the hook for its astonishing default'. The sociologist Lewis S. Feuer even entitled his leviathan study of the phenomenon of student protest around the world *The*

*Conflict of Generations: The Character and Significance of Student Movements.*<sup>47</sup>

Yet it is not possible to estimate the number of students who felt that they were playing a role in challenging the older generation. Such a position assumes that students were engaged in an open conflict, though it has been found in previous chapters that students only became involved in protest when they felt that an injustice had been committed. That it was usually committed by members of an older generation does not indicate that a conflict between the generations was the cause of student protest. Rather, it indicates that young people sought to change their position *vis-à-vis* the older generation, and that they felt that it was legitimate to challenge the authority of members of the older generation in order to gain this change. It also indicates that young people felt that they could realistically expect to force changes in decisions. It could be that the lack of an example from the young of the 1950s, and the resultant lack of a possible reference to the possibility of the failure of protests, combined with the lack of cynicism of inexperienced youth to produce this expectation, though it is only possible to speculate. Nevertheless, while the unique position of students within society, which was examined at the beginning of this chapter, made it possible for them to protest, and perhaps more likely to protest than other groups of young people, it was the changes in the attitudes of the young toward their position in society, and concomitant changes in their attitudes to authority, which took place in the 1960s, which meant that many students were willing to take part in protest activity.

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- <sup>1</sup> Harry Kidd, *The Trouble at LSE 1966-67* (Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 10.
- <sup>2</sup> See Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 1-18.
- <sup>3</sup> Interview with Herbert Marcuse on BBC Radio, reprinted in full in the *Listener*, 17 October 1968, pp. 498-499.
- <sup>4</sup> Parkin, *Middle class radicals*, pp. 157-158.
- <sup>5</sup> Booker, *The Neophiliacs*, p. 119.
- <sup>6</sup> Trevor Royle, *The Best Years of Their Lives: The National Service Experience 1945-1963* (Coronet 1988), pp. 273-274.
- <sup>7</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 25 November 1969, p. 1.
- <sup>8</sup> *The Times*, 27 May 1968, p. 8.
- <sup>9</sup> *Spectator*, 31 May 1968, pp. 735-736.
- <sup>10</sup> *Spectator*, 15 March 1968, p. 324.
- <sup>11</sup> *Marxist Youth Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3, M.R.C., MSS 149/4/3.
- <sup>12</sup> For an investigation into the impact of student welfare, staff-student relations, teaching practices, and accommodation upon student protest, see *Student Relations*, pp. 74-102.
- <sup>13</sup> See *Broadsheet*, 29 January 1959, p. 5.
- <sup>14</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 2 February 1965, p. 1.
- <sup>15</sup> *Report of the Committee on the Age of Majority under the Chairmanship of the Honourable Mr. Justice Latey*, July 1967, Cmnd. 3342, p. 40 and pp. 113-115.
- <sup>16</sup> *Daily Express*, 12 March 1968, p. 8.
- <sup>17</sup> *Union News*, 7 February 1969, p. 24. See also *University Discipline - The Student View Point*, MRC, MSS 137/MI, file 4.
- <sup>18</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 23 November 1965, p. 1.
- <sup>19</sup> *Concourse*, 26 January 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>20</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 18 March 1969, p. 1, and *Manchester Independent*, 6 May 1969, p. 1.
- <sup>21</sup> *Guardian*, 27 May 1968, p. 8.



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<sup>22</sup> For a detailed examination of changes in attitudes to sex and sexuality in Britain in the twentieth century, see Cate Haste, *Rules of Desire* (Chatto and Windus, 1992).

<sup>23</sup> *Daily Mail*, 15 March 1967, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 21 March 1967, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Gallup Poll, *Student Demonstrations*, May 1968, p. 4. For details of a teach-in on 'Student Power', see *Beaver*, 17 November 1966, p. 5. For a discussion on the subject in the student press, see *Union News*, 9 October 1968, p. 5. See also Cockburn and Blackburn (eds), *Student Power*, and the *Guardian*, 7 March 1968, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 15 October 1968, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> London and Cambridge Economic Service, *The British Economy: Key Statistics 1900 - 1970* (Times Newspapers) table 6, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> Fraser, 1968, p. 64.

<sup>30</sup> See Ian Chambers, *Urban Rhythms: Pop Music and Popular Culture* (MacMillan, 1985), Robert Murphy, *Sixties British Cinema* (British Film Institute, 1992), Bart Moore Gilbert and John Seed (eds), *Cultural Revolution? The Challenge of the Arts in the 1960s* (Routledge, 1992), Robert Hewison, *Too Much: Art and Society in the Sixties 1960-1975* (Methuen, 1986), Mike Brake, *The Sociology of Youth Culture and Youth Subculture* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), D. Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Methuen, 1979) and Simon Frith, *The Sociology of Youth* (Causeway Press, 1986), for various accounts of the development of youth culture in the 1960s, and its wider impact or relevance.

<sup>31</sup> Bryan Wilson, *The Youth Culture and the Universities* (Faber and Faber, 1970), p. 13. See also Kenneth Hudson, *The Language of the Teenage Revolution* (MacMillan, 1983), pp. 36-52.

<sup>32</sup> See Colin Larkin (ed), *The Guinness Who's Who of Sixties Music* (Guinness, 1995) for an exhaustive description of popular music in the 1960s.

<sup>33</sup> Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, p. 150.

<sup>34</sup> Ray Coleman, *Lennon: The Definitive Biography* (Pan, 1995), p. 561.

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<sup>35</sup> Paul Freidlander, *Rock and Roll: A Social History* (Westview, 1996), p. 284. See also pp. 6-7.

Also useful is Brian Longhurst, *Popular Music and Society* (Polity Press, 1995), pp. 195-202.

<sup>36</sup> Jazz appears to have been seen by many young people in the 1950s and 1960s as a rebellious form of music. See, for example, Jonathon Green, *Days in the Life*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>37</sup> Simon Frith, *The Sociology of Rock* (Constable, 1978), p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> Ian Campbell, 'Music Against the Bomb' in John Minnion and Philip Bolsover (eds), *The CND Story: The First 25 years of CND In The Words of the People Involved* (Allison and Busby, 1983), p.115.

<sup>39</sup> For chart details for the 1950s and 1960s see Paul Gambaccini, Tim Rice, and Jonathon Rice (eds), *British Hit Singles* (Guinness, 1995).

<sup>40</sup> Taylor, *Against the Bomb*, pp. 342-343.

<sup>41</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 19 April 1968, p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 22 April 1968, p. 15.

<sup>43</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 4 March 1969, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> *Spectator*, 26 April 1968, p. 577.

<sup>45</sup> 'Student Revolt', *A Lecture given in Canterbury Cathedral, 5th November 1969, by The Right Honourable Sir Edward Boyle, Bart., MP*, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Guardian*, 7 March 1968, p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> Lewis S. Feuer, *The Conflict of Generations: The Character and Significance of Student Movements* (Heinemann, 1969).

## CHAPTER 6

### PUBLIC OPINION, THE MEDIA, AND THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

The consideration of public and press opinion which will take place in this chapter will help to place the suggested changes in popular attitudes to authority which were outlined in the last chapter into sharper focus. This will provide further confirmation of the nature of traditional attitudes to authority by highlighting the responses of both the press and the public to student protest. The influence of the press upon student protest will also be assessed, particularly with regard to press coverage of the Vietnam War. It has been suggested in previous chapters that students protested on moral issues, and in this chapter the factors which made the Vietnam War such an emotive issue will be considered, which will make it necessary to outline the ways in which students gained information on the War via the media. By investigating public reaction to the student movement this chapter will also continue the discussion which was begun in chapter 4 on the revolutionary potential of the student movement. To avoid such a discussion would entail the risk of overestimating (or underestimating) the importance to non-students of the issues about which students protested, as well as the impact, or potential impact, of the student movement upon public opinions and actions, and ultimately therefore, of the potency of the student movement as a political force.

Although public opinion about student protests, and about the issues which students protested about, seems to have been mixed, it tended to take the form of opposition. While it suggested in the last chapter that student protest reflected changes in attitudes to authority in wider society, these changes appear to have taken place predominantly among the attitudes of the young. Among the rest of society, traditional attitudes to authority appear to have informed the

majority popular response to student protest. It seems that few members of the general public understood the reasons for student protest, and many viewed it as a transgression of traditional modes of deference. Opinions appear to have ranged from apathy to outright opposition. At an anti-Vietnam War demonstration by students in Birmingham in February 1967, for example, the 'comments of spectators - who were not taking much notice of the march - ranged from "me mate - not interested" to "if they didn't look so scruffy people would take more notice of them".<sup>1</sup> A demonstration through Leeds by 2,000 Leeds University students, again in February 1967, over the raising of overseas students' fees, prompted varied 'but often hostile' responses from onlookers, including, "greedy beggars. They should go out and work. It's what everyone else has to do" was one reaction, while, "I hope this doesn't have any effect; we shouldn't have coloured people at our universities," was another'.<sup>2</sup> A survey of public opinion in Leeds in November 1968, which was carried out by the *Evening Standard*, found that 77 per cent of those questioned said that authorities 'should take tougher action against those who take part in demonstrations, or clash with the authorities at their own university'. Over half said that students made them feel angry rather than sympathetic, while 74 per cent said that the ringleaders of occupations should be expelled.<sup>3</sup> In a survey conducted by *Gallup* in June 1968, people were asked 'do you, on the whole, sympathise with the students or with the authorities in disputes about the way the universities are run?'. Of those asked, only 15 per cent supported students, while 45 per cent supported the authorities. Furthermore, there was limited support for the non-educational issues about which students protested: 72 per cent agreed with those who wanted

Britain to stop 'coloured immigrants' (their term) from entering the country, although 51 per cent agreed with those who wanted America to withdraw from Vietnam.<sup>4</sup>

A survey, conducted by *New Society* in November 1969, on people's attitudes to the 1960s, is particularly useful. Among the 1,071 people who took part, it was found that apart from the 26 per cent who objected to 'easier laws on homosexuality, divorce, abortion, etc.', and the 23 per cent objected to 'the immigration of coloured people', 'student unrest was the most strenuously objected to' of the changes which had taken place in the decade, with 23 per cent objecting to it.<sup>5</sup> This was true despite differences in gender, age, class, and political allegiances. *New Society* noted that 'hardly anyone was *in favour* of it. It seems that students are the vanguard of the students, rather than of the workers'. In another part of the survey people were asked 'which of these events was most important to you personally'. This part of the survey was split into two sections, with one dealing with 'headline' events of the decade, and the other dealing with ongoing issues. In the former group, 39 per cent chose 'man going to outer space' as the most important event of the decade for them, while 29 per cent chose the death of President Kennedy. In the latter group, 37 per cent chose the devaluation of the pound, and 22 per cent chose Labour winning the General Election. Only 13 per cent chose the Vietnam War, while 8 per cent chose Russia invading Czechoslovakia, and 3 per cent chose the Cuba crisis. In the division by age-group, 21 per cent of 16-24 year olds chose the Vietnam war, but only 11 per cent of 25-44 year olds, 10 per cent of 45-64 year olds, and 10 per cent of those who were 65 years or older.

Concern about violent demonstrations and the wasting of taxpayer's money seem to have been common sources of disagreement with student protests. For example, as part of a survey of people in Coventry in June 1968 on the subject of student militancy and demonstrations, a Mr. Ellis, a stonemason, argued that 'we pay thousands for students' education, and they should be grateful. There is enough trouble in the world without them stirring it up. If these students have a genuine grievance then they should protest, but none of this violence'.<sup>6</sup> A Mr. Stearns, a fishmonger, said that 'he thought...“not much”...of student revolts. He considered that it was...“all a waste of tax-payers' money. I entirely disagree with demonstrations because of the violence - why can't they send in a petition. In that way I'm sure some of their suggestions could help in the long run”'.<sup>7</sup>

This is not to suggest that public opinion of the student movement took the form of universal condemnation. On the contrary, some members of the public may have agreed with the Coventry car worker who argued that 'students are doing the right thing. They're not wasting anything. Students can bring about a revolution - you look at France'.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, numerous members of the public also participated, alongside students, in protest about non-educational issues. For example, a *New Society* survey of the anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London on 27 October 1968 found that students made up only 'just over half' of the 100,000 participants.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, opposition towards the student movement seems to have been expressed by the majority of people and this throws considerable doubt on the suggestion that the student movement could have been a revolutionary vanguard. Moreover, as was suggested earlier, public

opinion appears to have been informed by traditional norms of behaviour and attitudes to authority. It is in only in this context that the nature of the rebellion which student protest represented can be understood.

It has also been suggested that few members of the public were aware of the reasons for the occurrence of student protest. This may have stemmed from lack of contact with students. Yet most people's source of information about the student movement was the national media. It would perhaps, therefore, be instructive to examine media attitudes to student protest with a view to discovering a possible influence on public opinion.

Certainly, coverage of student protest in the press and in television news was extensive, and great effort was taken to analyse the new phenomenon of student unrest.<sup>9</sup> Yet it has been noted that student protest was 'profoundly confusing and worrying to politicians and leader writers steeped in the British political culture with its stress upon tradition, due process, and appropriate channels'.<sup>10</sup> As a result this protest was explained in terms of deterministic theories such as those which were discussed in chapter 3, or it was blamed upon the corruption of normally decent students by a thuggish minority. This media coverage, and notably press coverage, was generally biased against students, therefore, and followed in the long tradition of the defence of law and order which has informed media and political reaction to protest in Britain for some time. In the 1930s, for example, newsreel coverage of hunger marches and fascist demonstrations 'played their own significant part in helping to 'police the boundaries of legitimate dissent' and in articulating 'the threshold of violence' that was permitted in British society'. It is notable then that the coverage of these



protests in the 1930s was similar to the press treatment of student protest in the 1960s. When describing a hunger march in Hyde Park in 1932, for instance, *British Paramount* argued that 'the hooligan element is getting out of hand, and inside the park ruffians unconnected with the marchers give the police a warm time'. It added that 'the mob slings anything they can lay their hands on, but discipline tells and its long odds on the police. By calmness and great courage the police have averted bloodshed and serious disturbance'.<sup>11</sup>

It will be seen that this is very similar to the coverage of student protest in the 1960s, and that this both informed and exemplified public responses to the challenge to authority which this protest represented. For example, an article in the *Spectator* in May 1968 referred to student protesters as 'disruptive elements' and 'feeble-minded students'. It grouped all student protesters under the heading 'student revolutionaries', and compared them to the fascist military regime which was then in power in Greece. It went on to argue that 'the principal difference (apart from age) is that the Greek colonels kept quiet until they were in a position to implement their beliefs. This simply shows that they are rather more intelligent than the students'.<sup>12</sup> While this was an extreme view, condemnation of student protesters in the national press was common. In March 1968, for example, the *Guardian* carried out a three-part inquiry into student protest under the title 'The British student: Democrat or Layabout?', which came, on the whole, to negative conclusions.<sup>13</sup> When discussing the L.S.E. sit-in of March 1967 the *Daily Mirror* argued that

at best it is highly premature; at worst it is rowdyism.

The Daily Mirror gives some advice to the dissident students and lecturers of the LSE.

Call it a day. Stop wrecking the work of a world-famous member-college of London University.

Students who study politics and economics ought to know how to behave intelligently and constitutionally. They ought to be able to wait for the result of the appeal.

The London School of Economics exists for teaching and studying and thinking straight. Not for the muddleheaded organisation of wildcat strikes.<sup>14</sup>

In another article on the L.S.E. sit-in, the *Daily Express* journalist Robert Pitman argued that 'the overwhelming majority of adults in this country...are sick and tired of coming home from a hard day's work and reading in the evening paper that, while they themselves were busy providing taxes to sustain the universities, a university mob was protesting against something which is not a matter for protest at all'.<sup>15</sup>

Nonetheless, there were statements of support for students in the press. For example, the *Sun*, while condemning students at Essex University who participated in a violent demonstration in May 1968, and who occupied the University's administration building in protest at subsequent disciplinary action, argued that 'The academic authorities would also be wise to accept the fact that discipline in universities - when the careers of young people may be at stake - can no longer reasonably be left without some real form of student representation'.<sup>16</sup> Such support was, however, rare, and opposition, often misinformed, was the norm. Perhaps over no other issue was this more the case than in the coverage of protest against the Vietnam War. While protest over other issues was also the

subject of critical discussion in the press, it was protest over the Vietnam War which received the most attention, and which aroused the strongest hostility throughout the press, notably in terms of the threat to law and order.<sup>17</sup> It would perhaps be instructive, therefore, to examine the coverage of anti-Vietnam War protest in detail.

Until the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (V.S.C.) demonstration in outside the U.S. Embassy in Grosvenor Square in London on Sunday 17 March 1968, press coverage of the anti-Vietnam War campaign generally took the form of mere reportage. Before this demonstration the protests against the war had been small in size, and had been mainly peaceful. After the formation of V.S.C. in June 1966 these protests gradually increased in size and moved away from the peace campaign of movements such as C.N.D. and the B.C.P.V., toward the pro-N.L.F. stance of the far left. As a result, violence became more common, as was noted in chapter 2. The demonstration on 17 March 1968, coming just over a month after the launch of the Têt offensive in Vietnam, attracted approximately 10,000 demonstrators and as has already been noted in chapter 2, it was the most violent demonstration in post-war Britain up to that date.

The scale and violence of the 17 March demonstration prompted declarations of outrage in the national press, and predictions of further violence to come. For example, in an article entitled 'The poison spread in the name of peace', Pearson Phillips of the *Daily Mail* asked 'how do you stamp out violence and rioting without trampling on free speech and free assembly? That is the problem posed by Grosvenor Square. This kind of thing has to be stopped. Violent scenes create other violent scenes'.<sup>18</sup> The *Sun* argued that 'Sunday's

deplorable battle round the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square shows how easily a demonstration can turn into a punch-up'. It suggested that demonstrations against individual targets, such as Embassies, 'should be banned'.<sup>19</sup> The *Daily Telegraph* noted that 'few who witnessed last Sunday's performance, whether in the streets or on the television screen, can have failed to discern in it a new and menacing feature. There were at least moments when the crowd seemed bent on violence as an end in itself. The more militant seemed determined not only to injure the police but also to expose themselves to injury'.<sup>20</sup> It then also went on to raise questions about the banning of such marches in future.

After this demonstration, and the protests by students in France in May 1968 (see next chapter), the press debated the possibility of escalating violence, and even revolution, in Britain. Although *New Society* suggested that 'in Britain, much of the talk about student power is (so far) cant', the *Guardian* argued in April that

taken together with the wave of student political violence in Japan, Italy and several Latin-American countries, as well as Poland and Czechoslovakia, it does look as though the politics of protest among the young is taking a universally revolutionary tenor. And after the upheavals in the British universities and the Grosvenor Square demonstration no one can claim that Britain is immune from this process.<sup>21</sup>

At the end of May the *Guardian*, in an editorial about the crisis in France, suggested that 'it could happen here - but it needn't'.<sup>22</sup> While this may seem to

have been unrealistic and melodramatic, it does fit into the treatment of student protest in terms of the threat to law and order.

Indeed, the possibility of violence and revolution was discussed with even greater vigour prior to the V.S.C. demonstration of 27 October 1968. As early as the beginning of September, *The Times* was carrying front page stories about a 'militant plot' to use the demonstration as the spring-board for a violent revolution.<sup>23</sup> On 15 October it ran a story about an alleged threat by students to disrupt the London Underground during the march. The story was the second part of an article entitled 'Attack on London buildings threat by the IRA'.<sup>24</sup> On 25 October *The Times*' editorial discussed the issue 'To ban or not to ban'.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, it was *The Times* which hyped the possibility of violence more than any other national newspaper. Nevertheless, predictions of violence at the demonstration were common in other newspapers. The *Sun* argued that 'even if much of the alarmist talk of "extremist groups" plotting an "October revolution" is wildly exaggerated, both police and protesters are well aware that there could all too easily be an explosion like the Grosvenor Square battle last March'.<sup>26</sup> In an inflammatory article in *The Daily Telegraph* on 26 October, Eldon Griffiths MP, the Consultant Adviser to the National Police Federation, predicted that

by tomorrow night, the West End of London just possibly may look like a battlefield. If the Anti-Everything demonstration lives up to its' organisers' (and some newspapers') expectations, tens of thousands of shouting, jostling demonstrators will invade the American and Australian missions, stone such United States establishments as the Hilton Hotel and American Express, break into the Houses of Parliament and reduce the city's traffic to chaos.<sup>27</sup>

He went on to predict that 'whichever way it goes, law and order in Britain faces its most serious challenge since the war'. When the demonstration proved, on the whole, to have been peaceful, the press were able to claim a victory for law and order and lavished the police with praise.

As the majority group participating in the demonstration, it is clear that students were seen by the press and by their own leaders as the main threat to this law and order. George Martin's request that N.U.S. members refrain from participating in the demonstration was given extensive coverage.<sup>28</sup> The L.S.E. was occupied in order to provide a haven and medical facilities for marchers, and in connection with this, and student involvement in the march, The *Daily Telegraph* asserted that

the university authorities have a special responsibility for the behaviour of their students on this occasion. If they find students guilty of violence, they should punish resolutely, not shrinking from their only ultimate sanction, expulsion. The good name of the universities itself is at stake. If Oct. 27 [*sic*] produces a major public disturbance, there can be no doubt of the effect: it will be a hostile, uncritical and dangerous reaction against students and all their works.<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, the *New Society* survey of the demonstration made it clear, in order to 'get certain myths out of the way', that students 'as a whole played a smaller part in the demonstration than the pre-publicity led one to expect'.<sup>30</sup>

In the case of the demonstration on 27 October the press and television build-up and coverage received widespread condemnation. It was attacked by the

police before the demonstration, and *The Times* received numerous letters of complaint from participants and observers.<sup>31</sup> In a letter to *It*, one participant in the demonstration complained that 'it is about time the Press got its priorities right. They are supposed to present news, not manufacture it. The inflammatory build-up by the Press could have caused a nasty situation, but luckily the sanity, maturity and restraint of most demonstrators kept things peaceful'.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, while the example of the coverage of the 27 October demonstration may be an extreme case, the mainly anti-student bias, and frequent inaccuracy, of media coverage of student protest, aroused antipathy toward the press among students. For example, in an article entitled 'The Student Press Replies' in Leeds University's *Union News* in March 1968, press coverage of protest was attacked. It was suggested that 'Henry Ford once said: "History is bunk". He could have added: "So is the popular Press!"'.<sup>33</sup>

Nonetheless, whatever the rights or wrongs of the press coverage given to student protest, students, and particularly those on the left, did provide the press with numerous threats and instances of violent behaviour with which to condemn them, and numerous examples of behaviour with which it was possible to ridicule them. For example, after the V.S.C. demonstration in London on 17 March 1968, Tariq Ali (one of the founders of V.S.C., later a member of I.M.G., and editor of *The Black Dwarf*), one of the organisers, admitted that the aim of the march was to invade the American Embassy 'for just as long as the Vietcong held the American Embassy in Saigon seven weeks ago', and that 'we were not there for a peaceful demonstration. Peace has no part in this crisis. The Americans are criminals and this must be shown to the world'.<sup>34</sup> He went on to explain that 'yes,

we want trouble. Conventional methods of protest have no meaning now'. Given such statements, and the assertion by students that 'after a confrontation on the scale of [sic] Grosvenor Square demonstration last march, the threat of an unprecedented explosion cannot be ruled out', press predictions of violence at the 27 October demonstration may perhaps have been understandable.<sup>35</sup> Students also gave the press the ability to ridicule them on numerous occasions. For example, in February 1969 reports of the Festival of Revolution at Essex University did not have to engage in critical debate, but rather they simply had to report the details of the events in order to ridicule students. *New Society*, for example, reported that 'painted wall slogans proclaimed "Revolt or fester", "The shit heap is smouldering", and "Don't just stand there - wank"'.<sup>36</sup> The BBC programme 'Students in revolt', shown on 13 June 1968, provided similar comic fare.<sup>37</sup> In the light of these, and numerous other possible examples, it is perhaps understandable that press coverage of student protest was often critical.

The influence of this press coverage upon public opinion seems likely to have taken the form of confirming opposition. It seems to be probable that the lack of detailed information in the press and the condemnation of students' attacks on traditional forms of deference to authority, as well as the perceived attacks on law and order, both informed public opinion and reflected it. For students, then, it was consistently made clear that their engagement in protest was a transgression of acceptable behaviour in the opinion of many people. Whether this informed their decisions to take part in protest is unlikely: it has already been noted that students took part in protests because they felt strongly about the issues involved. Nevertheless, it is important to note that it was within the



context of the rejection of traditional attitudes to authority which student protest took place, and that an analysis of popular and press attitudes to student protest highlights the nature of attitudes to authority and norms of acceptable behaviour.

On the other hand, the media may have been influential in providing students with the information and encouragement to become involved in protest, notably in the case of the Vietnam War. It has been argued that students took part in protests which were concerned with moral and emotive issues, and the main source of information on the Vietnam War was provided by the media. As Julian Pettifer, himself a BBC television journalist in Vietnam, has suggested, 'it's frequently been said that Vietnam was the first television war; the first conflict to be intensively filmed and to become daily fare on our news and current affairs programmes'. He went on to argue that 'it's worth reminding ourselves of a crucial fact: if Vietnam was the first television war, it was also the last. Among many bitter lessons, the Americans learned that by giving virtually unrestricted access to television crews they defeated themselves in the all important propaganda war'.<sup>38</sup> Accounts of the war by journalists, such as Michael Herr's *Dispatches*, and Hugh Lunn's *Vietnam: A Reporter's War*, make it clear that journalists were given access to combat areas and, in the case of Hugh Lunn's account, that they were given access clearance to combat areas which was the equivalent of that given to full colonels.<sup>39</sup> Yet open access for journalists did not automatically mean negative coverage of the war. Indeed, such open access was allowed in the hope that the world would see that America was winning the war and that it was helping Vietnam's economy and people. Initially this seems to have been successful, since Caroline Page, in her account of the development of

British press coverage of the War, has suggested that in 1965, at the start of the direct American military intervention, the British public and media were, on the whole, sympathetic to this U.S. strategy.<sup>40</sup>

As the war progressed, however, both media and public opinion changed. As early as June 1965 the *Guardian* noted that the presence of the American Ambassador to Vietnam at the teach-in on Vietnam which took place at Oxford University (see chapter 2) was 'a measure of their [the State Department] concern at the rising tide of feeling on the Vietnam situation in this country'.<sup>41</sup> It was noted above that by June 1968 51 per cent of people were opposed to the American military intervention in Vietnam. This change in public opinion occurred for a number of reasons, which Caroline Page has outlined.<sup>42</sup> For instance, the remoteness of the War made it difficult to justify the War as a defence of national security, and as a result of this and the length of the war, a strain was placed upon the U.S. propaganda machine. The regime which the Americans were defending was oppressive and corrupt (see below) and therefore contradicted the stated reasons for the military intervention: the defence of freedom and democracy. As a wealthy superpower American also acquired the image of a bully fighting against much weaker opposition. Thus one student argued that 'it has become intolerable to me that the British government supports American foreign policy, a policy which not only seeks to impose on most of the people of the world a life of meaningless poverty (by preventing economic development), but goes on to large scale killing and destruction - and all in the name of freedom'.<sup>43</sup> It could also be seen as trying to add to this wealth in a war of imperialist conquest, and V.S.C. certainly highlighted this line of argument, as

was illustrated in chapter 2. In the United States itself, the civil rights campaign highlighted the lack of democratic rights of a large section of American society, while American soldiers, many of them black, were supposedly fighting for democracy in Vietnam. Anti-Americanism may also have informed some British opposition. Examples of students burning the Stars and Stripes have already been provided in chapter 2, while one student stated that protest against the War 'was a protest against America and the American system. The way in which America is controlling other countries. In Vietnam they do it with bombs, in Britain through subtler means, such as dollars for Harold Wilson'.<sup>44</sup> While pacifism appears to have played a role in prompting opposition to the war, a crucial factor was the inhumanity and impersonality of the methods of prosecuting the war which the Americans employed, including indiscriminate defoliation, mass destruction and, in consequence, large numbers of civilian casualties (see below). Finally, it will be found below that these factors created a 'credibility gap' which was added to by the numerous occasions upon which the Johnson administration was found to have lied about the state of the war, and the success of various operations and initiatives.

As these issues prompted the media, and then the public, to question the military intervention, the images of the war which open media access allowed (and which appeared more regularly once media opposition to the war was established) created revulsion toward the nature of the Vietnam War itself. By the time of the Têt Offensive of February 1968 the coverage of, and commentary upon, the war was, with one exception, overwhelmingly negative. The Têt Offensive was launched by the Viet Cong on 30 January 1968 during the

traditional cease-fire for the Lunar New Year. Fierce fighting took place in numerous towns and cities throughout Vietnam, including Saigon, where the Viet Cong even managed to occupy the American Embassy for a few hours.

Tết may not just have been, arguably, the crucial turning point militarily, but also in terms of British public perception and media presentation of the war. Tết made it clear that the Americans could not win the war, that lies had been told about American successes and prospects, and that atrocities were being committed by both sides. Shortly after the start of the offensive Senator Robert Kennedy argued that 'a total military victory is not within sight or around the corner; that in fact, it is probably beyond our grasp'. He added that 'our enemy, savagely striking at will across all of South Vietnam, has finally shattered the mask of official illusion with which we have concealed our true circumstances, even from ourselves'.<sup>45</sup> In Britain the press agreed with this appraisal. For example, the *Sun* noted that 'areas supposed to have been "pacified" are still wide open to the Communists, that the South Vietnamese Government's control is shaky, and that the people of South Vietnam can have little confidence in the American claim to be defending them'. It went on to say that 'complete victory is impossible for either side'.<sup>46</sup> Only the *Daily Telegraph* continued to support the American cause, saying that it was 'possible that the Americans and South Vietnamese are on the verge of a major victory, perhaps even a watershed in the war'.<sup>47</sup>

During the Tết Offensive the media coverage of the war included unprecedentedly large numbers of horrifying scenes of the fighting and its aftermath, including photographs of atrocities taking place. The *Daily Mirror*

lamented that 'the horror of it all has been brought to the winter fireside by the television camera: there seems to be a prying lens behind every guilty gunsight'. It argued that 'there can be no victory, no defeat, only more suffering. It is time to call a stop'.<sup>48</sup> Photographs in the press included that of a captured Vietcong who was summarily executed by South Vietnamese marines, the public display of dead Vietcong soldiers, images of the fighting in Saigon, many involving civilians, including dead and wounded children, and scenes of the destruction of civilians' homes.<sup>49</sup> At the town of Ben Tre, which was destroyed by the Americans, causing numerous civilian casualties, reporters were told by an American officer that 'it became necessary to destroy the town to save it'.<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps the most influential photograph was that by Eddie Adams of Associated Press, of Brigadier-General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, head of the South Vietnamese national police, summarily executing a captured Vietcong officer during the fighting in Saigon. The photograph was used by every national daily newspaper, and was the only photograph taken during the Têt offensive to have had this distinction. A senior member of the regime for which America was fighting was caught in the act of committing an atrocity. The true nature of the South Vietnamese regime was revealed beyond doubt to the world and it provoked outrage from both the press and the public. When *The Times* published the photograph, the initial response of the readers was to protest that the image should not have been shown. After this initial outburst *The Times* received a great many more letters supporting their action and in an editorial on the subject *The Times* evaluated the impact of this, and other images of the war. The article is

worth quoting at length since it provides a valuable insight into the emotive power of these images. The editor argued that

*The Times* has no doubt that it was right to publish such a picture and about all the letters received after the first outburst support that view. Of course it was a shocking picture of a shocking act. Such pictures may be exploited in the press in certain circumstances. But the very weight of the reaction in this case confirms that the sense of shock had been rightly awakened. The realities of the Vietnam War had been brought home to many who had not realized its full horror...

The outburst of public feeling represented by the letters *The Times* has received is one of shock and horror common to all the writers, irrespective of the opinions on whether or not *The Times* should have published the picture. What can be extracted from this outburst is an even greater sense than existed before in Britain that this war must be stopped. The early beliefs that some victory was possible are now being buried deeper and deeper by the indiscriminate sufferings of people to whom those beliefs are meaningless. The pictures - or even more racking to the emotions the film on our television screens - of mothers clutching wounded children, running for a shelter they do not know how to find amid the destruction that surrounds them - all this prompts the question: what can we do?<sup>51</sup>

It would seem to be likely, then, that the coverage of the Vietnam War which was provided by the media was responsible for encouraging students to protest about the Vietnam War, even though the press consistently condemned such protests. Students protested about moral issues, and the treatment of the Vietnam War which took place in the media highlighted the moral aspects of opposition to the War. This is not to deny the existence of other sources of

information on the War. The horrors of the War were used in posters advertising protests, while examples of photographic displays at universities were given in chapter 2.<sup>52</sup> A further blow to the American claim to be fighting a 'just' war was provided by the International War Crimes Tribunal (I.W.C.T.), which included Bertrand Russell, Jean-Paul Satre, Simone de Beauvoir and Isaac Deutscher among its members. This independent body was founded in November 1966 and sent investigators to Vietnam. In its final report, which was published in May 1967 it found the United States guilty of committing 'a war crime' and 'crimes against humanity'.<sup>53</sup> It was, nevertheless, the media which provided the greatest amount of coverage on the Vietnam War, and the greatest number of examples of American shortcomings. It may be that the significant rise in the numbers attending anti-Vietnam War protests, notably those in London on 17 March and 27 October 1968, was related to the coverage of the war during the Têt Offensive and after. Yet, in the *New Society* survey of the 27 October demonstration it was suggested that 'the mass media seem to have played little part in influencing demonstrators to come along on Sunday'. This conclusion was arrived at because when asked 'what source of information most influenced you to come?', only 3 per cent chose television, and 13 per cent chose newspapers. Political groups influenced 28 per cent, and friends influenced 29 per cent.<sup>54</sup> It seems likely, however, that this 'influence' refers to the publicity given to the demonstration itself, rather than the provision of motivation to protest about the Vietnam War. Yet by 1969 even the horror of the My Lai massacre was not sufficient to prompt mass protests.<sup>55</sup> By that stage the student movement had moved on to protest about other issues. The American intervention in Vietnam had been discredited,

President Johnson had refused to stand for re-election, and America had begun the task of extricating itself from Vietnam.<sup>56</sup>

Nevertheless, it seems likely that media coverage of the War did prompt students to protest about the War before 1969, while public opinion about the student movement does appear to have reflected the extent of the change in attitudes to authority which student protest represented. Moreover, public opinion, and the press attitude to the student movement, do help to place the movement into a wider perspective, and further suggest that it was not, and did not have the potential to be, a revolutionary movement.



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<sup>1</sup> *Redbrick*, 8 February 1967, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Union News*, 24 February 1967, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Union News*, 22 November 1968, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Gallup Political Index*, Report No. 98, June 1968, p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> *New Society*, 27 November 1969, pp. 847-848.

<sup>6</sup> *Campus*, 25 June 1968, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Campus*, *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *New Society*, 31 October 1968, p. 631.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the BBC 1 programme, 'Students in revolt', which was broadcast on 13 June 1968. The BBC brought student leaders from across Europe to Britain in order to attend the programme. See also the 'Students in revolt' series of articles in *The Times* from 27 May 1968 to 1 June 1968.

<sup>10</sup> Steve Chibnall, *Law and Order News: An Analysis of Crime Reporting in the British Press* (Tavistock, 1977), p. 90.

<sup>11</sup> Tony Aldgate, 'The newsreels, public order and the projection of Britain', in James Curran, Anthony Smith and Pauline Wingate (eds), *Impacts and Influences: Essays on media power in the twentieth century* (Methuen, 1987), pp. 146-147. See also F. C. Mather, *Public Order in the Age of the Chartists* (Manchester University Press, 1959) in which it is noted that the Chartists were seen by those in government as a threat to public law and order and were dealt with in terms of that threat.

<sup>12</sup> *Spectator*, 24 May 1968, p. 694. See also the anti-student 'poems' by Christopher Hollis in the *Spectator*, 2 February 1968, p. 127; 29 March 1968, p. 396; 28 June 1968, p. 384.

<sup>13</sup> *Guardian*, 7 March 1968, p. 7 is the first of these articles.

<sup>14</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 15 March 1967, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Daily Express*, 15 March 1967, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> *Sun*, 17 May 1968, p. 3.

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<sup>17</sup> Coverage of sit-ins usually took the form of reportage, though some sit-ins, such as those at the L.S.E. in 1967 and 1969, at Essex University in May 1968, and Warwick University in February 1970, were the subject of considerable debate in the press. Protests against members of the government or members of the parliamentary opposition, were also given extensive coverage, especially when they were violent. See, for example, the *Guardian*, 9 March 1968, p. 1 for coverage of a violent demonstration at Cambridge University against Dennis Healey. See *The Times*, 4 May 1968, p. 1, 6 May 1968, p. 11, 8 May 1968, p. 11, 21 May 1968, p. 3, and 23 May 1968, p. 2 for extensive, and often inaccurate coverage of a violent demonstration at Leeds University against the Conservative MP, Patrick Wall.

<sup>18</sup> *Daily Mail*, 19 March 1968, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> *Sun*, 19 March 1968, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 19 March 1968, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup> *New Society*, 16 May 1968, p. 699; *Guardian*, 3 April 1968, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> *Guardian*, 27 May 1968, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> *The Times*, 5 September 1968, p. 1. See also the editorial on p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> *The Times*, 15 October 1968, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> *The Times*, 25 October 1968, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> *Sun*, 3 October, 1968, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 26 October 1968, p. 12. See also the leader on the front page.

<sup>28</sup> See *The Times*, 24 October 1968, p. 1; *Guardian*, 24 October 1968, p. 18; the *Sun*, 25 October 1968, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 18 October 1968, p. 18. See also *The Times*, 24 October 1968, p. 1, for extensive coverage of the L.S.E. occupation.

<sup>30</sup> *New Society*, 31 October 1968, p. 631.

<sup>31</sup> *The Times*, 8 October 1968, p. 3 contains details of the police complaints. For the letters of complaint after the demonstration see *The Times*, 30 October 1968, p. 9. For a detailed discussion of the news coverage given to the demonstration see James D. Halloran, Philip Elliott, and Graham Murdoch, *Demonstrations and Communications: A Case Study* (Penguin, 1970).

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- <sup>32</sup> *It*, 15 - 18 November 1968, p. 4.
- <sup>33</sup> *Union News*, 15 March 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>34</sup> *Sun*, 19 March 1968, p. 16.
- <sup>35</sup> *Union News*, 9 October 1968, p. 5.
- <sup>36</sup> See *New Society*, 20 February 1969, p. 272. See also *Darts*, 27 February 1969, p. 10.
- <sup>37</sup> See *Guardian*, 14 June 1968, p. 10, *Daily Telegraph*, 14 June 1968, p. 1, and the *Sun*, 14 June 1968, p. 1. All of these articles ridicule the students taking part.
- <sup>38</sup> *Timewatch*, broadcast on BBC 2, Thursday 30 March 1995.
- <sup>39</sup> Michael Herr, *Dispatches* (Pan, 1978), Hugh Lunn, *Vietnam: A Reporter's War* (University of Queensland Press, 1985). See also Michael Bilton and Kevin Sim, *Four Hours in My Lai* (Penguin, 1992), and D. C. Hallin, *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam* (Oxford University Press, 1986).
- <sup>40</sup> Caroline Page, 'The Strategic Manipulation of American Official Propaganda during the Vietnam War, 1965-1966, and British Opinion on the War' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Reading, 1989).
- <sup>41</sup> *Guardian*, 16 June 1965, p. 1.
- <sup>42</sup> See Page, *ibid.*, pp. 2-3, pp. 35-36, p. 41, p. 45, pp. 115 - 116.
- <sup>43</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 19 April 1968, p. 5.
- <sup>44</sup> *Daily Mirror*, *ibid.*
- <sup>45</sup> *The Times*, 9 February 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>46</sup> *Sun*, 1 February 1968, p. 2.
- <sup>47</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 2 February 1968, p. 16. By October this amazing self deception had been replaced by the acceptance that the war could not be won by either side. The newspapers' support for the Americans, however, remained. See the *Daily Telegraph*, 21 October 1968, p. 7.
- <sup>48</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 7 February 1968, p. 2.
- <sup>49</sup> See *Guardian*, 19 February 1968, p. 1; *The Times*, 2 February 1968, p. 14, and 10 February 1968, p. 7; the *Sun*, 1 February 1968, p. 1, and 2 February 1968, p. 14.
- <sup>50</sup> See *The Times*, 12 February 1968, p. 1, and the *Sun*, 9 February 1968, p. 2.

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<sup>51</sup> *The Times*, 7 February 1968, p. 9.

<sup>52</sup> For examples of posters see M.R.C., MSS 21/97, MSS 21/1124, MSS 21/1126, and MSS 21/3369/27-28. These include posters by the International Confederation for Disarmament and Peace, V.S.C., and the British Vietnam Committee. For examples of the publicity by the B.C.P.V. see MSS 189/V, box 1, file 1.

<sup>53</sup> For a full list of the membership, details of the first press conference in November 1966, and details, including photographs, of the I.W.C.T. fact-finding mission to Vietnam in January and February 1967, see M.R.C., MSS 302/4/2. See also Tariq Ali, *Street Fighting Years*, for an account of the I.W.C.T. journey through Vietnam. For a full text of the 'Verdict of the Stockholm Session of the International War Crimes Tribunal', which was given on 10 May 1967, see *VSC Bulletin*, No. 5, June 1967, pp. 5-11, M.R.C., MSS 189/V, box 1, file 7.

<sup>54</sup> *New Society*, 31 October 1968, pp. 631-2.

<sup>55</sup> For an account of the massacre, the cover-up, the press exposure of both, and the subsequent trial, see Bilton and Sim, *Four hours in My Lai*. For examples of posters see M.R.C., MSS 21/97, MSS 21/1124, MSS 21/1126, MSS 21/3369/27-28. These include posters by the International Confederation for Disarmament and Peace, V.S.C., and the British Vietnam Committee. For examples of the publicity by the British Campaign/ Council for Peace in Vietnam see MSS 189/V, box 1, file 1. This includes the *Declaration of the British Council for Peace in Vietnam*, which was the B.C.P.V.'s 'manifesto'.

<sup>56</sup> Johnson announced his intention not to seek the nomination of his party for another term in office on 31 March 1968. Vietnam was singled out by commentators as the main consideration in this decision. See *The Daily Mail*, 2 April 1968, p. 1. Martin Luther King was assassinated just a few days later, on 4 April.

## CHAPTER 7

### AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOVEMENT ?

The student protests which occurred in Britain in the 1960s took place within the context of simultaneous protests by young people around the world. Countries as geographically and culturally disparate as Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Spain, and the United States, among others, all experienced protests by students and other young people at various times throughout the decade. This was an unprecedented phenomenon, and many observers and commentators have been unable to resist the temptation to view these protests as being linked in some way. It has been suggested, for example, that these protests were internationally revolutionary in origin and outlook. Student protest in Britain has also been seen as a mere copying of the protests of students in other countries, and it has also been 'blamed' upon a supposed subversion of British students by foreign infiltrators. All of these interpretations will be examined in this chapter. It will be noted that although the British student movement should be considered within the international context, and it was probably influenced but not caused by events elsewhere, it was unique. Nonetheless, it will also be suggested that although there were fundamental differences between the British student movement and those in other countries, the student protests which occurred around the world in the 1960s were all challenges to authority in various forms, and most represented attempts to force those in authority to live up to already stated objectives.

The belief that the British student movement was part of a wider international revolutionary movement was popular among contemporary observers. This was particularly the case in reaction to the events in France in May 1968, when students rioted in Paris following the arrest of students who had

taken part in a sit-in, and violent clashes with police during an anti-Vietnam War demonstration in Paris. This was followed by similar protests in cities across France, after which French workers joined the protests, which had by that stage become directed at the regime of General de Gaulle. On 20 May six million workers and students held a general strike, and although de Gaulle won a landslide victory in the Presidential election in June, the French state had been shaken.<sup>1</sup> In Britain, fears were expressed that a similar challenge could also be made to the British government. The *Sun* described events in France as ‘a shudder that is leaving cracks in the stability of society and countries across the world, from America to Germany, to Czechoslovakia. The cracks are small so far in Britain, but that is no reason to be smug’.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the *Guardian* argued that ‘the crisis in the Sorbonne falls into the pattern which seems to link most Western universities. And many of the issues which the French student leaders are raising strike an international chord in campuses in this country and elsewhere. It would be complacent to ignore them’.<sup>3</sup> After the conclusion of the events of May 1968, the *Guardian* also argued that

the political and ideological discontents are more significant if we want to examine the French movement in terms of world student unrest. For they gave shape to the discontents of thousands of young people who do not share the specific academic grievances of the French students. They gave to the confused aspirations of thousands of young people “a local habitation and a name” L’anarchie c’est je [*sic*]. In other words, quite [*sic*] radical critique of all that is accepted.<sup>4</sup>

*Private Eye* even satirised the numerous inquiries of ‘could it happen here?’ which appeared in the press.<sup>5</sup>

Numerous subsequent commentators have also argued that the British student movement was part of an international movement. Both David Caute and Ronald Fraser have relied upon this interpretation, for example, even though they have recognised the idiosyncrasies of the student movements in each country. Immanuel Wallerstein has included the student protests of the 1960s within his global view of historical development and analysis, and in reference to the events of 1968 he has argued that ‘its origins, consequences, and lessons cannot be analysed correctly by appealing to the particular circumstances of the local manifestations of this global phenomenon, however much the local factors conditioned the details of the political and social struggles in each locality’.<sup>6</sup> A particularly clear exposition of this view has also been provided by Eric Hobsbawm, who will be quoted at length. Hobsbawm insists that

the student revolt of the late 1960s was the last hurrah of the old world revolution. It was revolutionary in both the ancient utopian sense of seeking a permanent reversal of values, a new and perfect society, and in the operational sense of seeking to achieve it by action on streets and barricades, by bomb and mountain ambush. It was global, not only because the ideology of the revolutionary tradition, from 1789 to 1917, was universal and international...but because, for the first time, the world, or at least the world in which student ideologists lived, was genuinely global...The first generation of humanity to take rapid and cheap global air travel and communication for granted, the students of the late 1960s, had no difficulty in recognising what was happening at the Sorbonne, in Berkeley, in Prague, as part of the same event in the same global village in which, according to the Canadian guru Marshall McLuhan,...we all lived.<sup>7</sup>



Yet this interpretation does not conform to the conclusions which have been reached in the previous chapters of this current study.

Indeed, while some of the statements and actions of British students do seem to confirm the international view, such examples are not numerous. One student did argue that 'there is a feeling of solidarity between us. A feeling of world-wide solidarity. This is something which unites us through scholarship and awareness'.<sup>8</sup> An article in the Keele University Students' Union newspaper *Concourse* was entitled 'Berlin - Berkeley - L.S.E.', and students who were involved in the anti-Vietnam War Campaign also seem to have taken pride in their involvement in a global movement.<sup>9</sup> After the V.S.C. demonstration in London on 27 October 1968, for example, the *VSC Bulletin* listed telegrams of support which V.S.C. had received from anti-Vietnam War organisations around the world, including messages from Toronto, New York, Milan, Chicago, San Francisco, South Africa, Greece, and the North Vietnamese delegation at the Paris peace talks.<sup>10</sup> Anti-Vietnam War protesters also took part in global days of protest. In October 1965, for example, C.N.D. and the B.C.P.V. organised a demonstration in Grosvenor Square which was part of an International Day of Protest, with simultaneous demonstrations taking place across America, including a march by 10,000 people in New York.<sup>11</sup> International protests also took place again on Human Rights Day, 10 December 1966, during which demonstrators in London held a torchlit procession to St. Paul's Cathedral.<sup>12</sup> The following year a demonstration in London on 22 October took place at the same time as demonstrations in Washington, Paris, Berlin, Copenhagen, Ottawa, and

Sydney.<sup>13</sup> Students also took part in protests over issues in parallel with demonstrations elsewhere in the world. Most notably, students in Manchester and London protested in May 1968 in solidarity with French students. In Manchester students held a march through the city, while in London, students at the L.S.E. occupied the School and at one point the anarchist flag flew above the School.<sup>14</sup> While these examples may indicate that some British students felt a sympathy and common cause with student protesters in other countries, such examples are few and far between. It is therefore not possible to conclude that the majority of British student protesters identified with an international student movement. To suggest that they were prompted to protest as a result of an international revolutionary outlook is not convincing.

This is further confirmed by a comparative analysis of the British student movement and student movements in other countries. The immediate causes of student protests in other countries were fundamentally different to those in Britain, for instance. Perhaps most strikingly, the increase in the numbers of students attending university contributed less to causing student protest in Britain than in many other countries, where expansion was much greater. In the United States, for example, student numbers rose from 3,582,726 in 1960 to 6,928,115 in 1968.<sup>15</sup> In France they rose from 150,000 in 1955-56 to 280,000 in 1962-63, and 605,000 in 1967-68.<sup>16</sup> In both the United States and France, staff-student ratios and facilities failed to keep up with the expansion in student numbers. The result was that students who attended Berkeley, for example, were able to argue that 'we really did speak of Berkeley as a factory. Classes were immense, and you didn't feel that you could get near professors because they were this presence

way up in front on the lectern. If you were lucky, you were out there in the sea of a thousand faces. If not, you were in the next room, looking at him on television.<sup>17</sup> In France 'libraries and laboratories were overrun, it was often impossible to get a seat in a lecture hall, and students were frequently compelled to listen to loudspeakers outside'.<sup>18</sup> The result was that students in these countries engaged in protests which were specifically aimed at improving facilities. Thus the *Guardian* highlighted 'a colossal expansion in student numbers..., a supply of teachers and buildings which has not kept pace, authoritarian regulation', as being among the causes of student protests in France.<sup>19</sup> This was significantly different to the experience of British students who entered a university system which kept pace with the expansion in student numbers, as was noted in chapter 1. The provision of facilities was therefore not an issue which prompted British students to take part in more than a very few protests.

The authorities in Britain also provoked less extreme responses as a result of their handling of protests. Indeed, violence by those in authority was more common in other countries. The French Compagnie Républicaine de Sécurité (C.R.S.), who were responsible for policing the Paris riots in May 1968, were described by the *Daily Mirror* as dispensing 'brutality and ferocity', and 'thuggery...almost on a par with the accepted SS image'.<sup>20</sup> In America, state authorities employed violence regularly. In April 1968 a thousand police were used to evict students who were occupying Columbia University in New York. Their violent tactics resulted in 148 injuries to students.<sup>21</sup> In August 1968, the police used violence to disperse demonstrators outside the Democratic Convention in Chicago.<sup>22</sup> At the 'People's park' demonstration at Berkeley in

May 1969 'policemen with shotguns and National Guardsmen with tear gas opened fire on rioters...incapacitating scores of persons'.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps most notably, however, National Guardsmen shot and killed four students at Kent State University in Ohio during a demonstration there on 4 May 1970.<sup>24</sup> As a result, four million students went on strike, and nine hundred campuses were shut down.<sup>25</sup> Not only did troops in Mexico City open fire on demonstrators in September 1968, killing a still unknown number of people, but 'they took people out over the Pacific and threw them out of planes'.<sup>26</sup> The use of such violent and oppressive tactics by those in authority was likely to breed resentment rather than to quell disorder, and this seems to have been the case around the world where such methods were used. In Britain, neither the state or university authorities went to such extremes. Violent demonstrations did take place, with both demonstrators and police suffering injuries, as was noted in chapter 2. Yet students in Britain were not subject to the kind of brutality which students in other countries faced. While some British students were prosecuted, and actually served prison sentences for their involvement in violent protests, there were no instances of British students being killed as a result of their participation in demonstrations.

Nevertheless, many student protests, both in Britain and elsewhere, were the result of perceived transgressions of acceptable modes of behaviour. These may have been less extreme in Britain, but it has been consistently argued in this study that perceived breaches of moral conventions were usually central to the cause of student protest in Britain. This also appears to have been the case in other countries. Indeed, it has been argued in previous chapters that British

students often protested in an attempt to force those in authority to live up to the democratic ethos of their institution, such as the inclusion of all members of the academic community in university governments. It is notable then, that the American student organisation Students for a Democratic Society (S.D.S.) based its guiding document, the Port Huron Statement, upon the desire for America to live up to its constitutional ideals. It argued, when the Statement was written in 1962, that

America rests in national stalemate, its goals ambiguous and tradition-bound instead of informed and clear, its democratic system apathetic and manipulated rather than “of, by, and for the people.”...[sic] The American political system is not the democratic model of which its glorifiers speak. In actuality it frustrates democracy by confusing the individual citizen, paralyzing policy discussions, and consolidating the irresponsible power of military and business interests....[sic] America is without community, impulse, without the inner momentum necessary for an age when societies cannot successfully perpetuate themselves by their military weapons, when democracy must be viable because of the quality of life, not its quantity of rockets....[sic] Americans are in withdrawal from public life, from any collective effort at directing their own affairs.

This statement has been described as having ‘so thoroughly plumbed and analyzed the conditions of mid-century American society, and so successfully captured and shaped the spirit of the new student mood, that it became not only a statement of principles for ... SDS...but even more a summary of beliefs for much of the student generation as a whole, then and for several years to come’.<sup>27</sup> It may not have been the case that this statement was directly applicable to British

students, among whom the Port Huron Statement appears to have remained an obscure and little known document, but the sentiments which it expressed did find parallels in statements by British students when referring to their university governments (see chapter 1 and 2). Similarly, Martin Luther King's 'I Have A Dream' speech was a request that America live up to its promise of freedom and equality for all. The speech, which took place in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington in August 1963, began with the statement that 'fivescore years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity'. The speech continued, however, by noting that

one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free; one hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination; one hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity; one hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land.<sup>28</sup>

The civil rights campaigns by American students in S.D.S., the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee (S.N.C.C.) and other organisations were also similar in their aims of forcing those in authority in America to recognise and remedy the perceived difference between the constitutional and actual rights of black American citizens.<sup>29</sup> In a number of countries, then, young people

challenged those in authority. They asserted that their opinions mattered as much as those in authority, or members of older generations. This indicates a similarity between the British student movement and the movements in other countries, in that the attitudes toward authority among young people in various countries had changed. This is not to compare the magnitude of the task facing American Civil Rights protesters with that facing British students, but it is to acknowledge that both groups were 'disenfranchised', and both claimed that their opinion mattered; they claimed justice and equality of treatment, and they challenged those in authority in order to achieve these aims. Many of the issues which prompted students in different countries to protest were also similar, including Vietnam and racism. Yet this does not signify the existence of an international student movement.

Indeed, the student movements in other countries seem to have been more revolutionary in outlook than was the case in Britain. In France it was organisations such as the Trotskyist group *Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire* (J.C.R.) and the Maoist organisation *Union des Jeunesse Communistes marxistes-leninistes* (U.J.C.-m.l.) which led the student riots of May 1968. In Germany, the student protests in 1968 were led by the revolutionary group *Socialistische Deutsche Studentenbund* (S.D.S.). By 1968-69 American S.D.S. alone claimed to have between eighty and one hundred thousand members, and represented the largest student organisation in America.<sup>30</sup> As has been noted, it aimed to change American society so that it lived up to its constitutional ideals of democracy and freedom, and it proposed to bring about this change by revolutionary (though not Marxist revolutionary) means. Moreover, Ronald

Fraser has noted that according to a survey in the magazine *Fortune*, 380,000 enrolled American students considered themselves to be revolutionaries in the Autumn of 1968, and this rose to one million in 1970.<sup>31</sup> While this was by no means the majority of American students, it was a much greater figure, both proportionately and absolutely, than in Britain, where the far left was only a small percentage of a much smaller university population (see chapter 3). In Britain, no single far left organisation could be said to have led the student movement, or to have claimed the support of more than a small proportion of it. Indeed, unlike organisations such as American or German S.D.S., the British student movement did not have an umbrella organisation which was capable of including large numbers of disparate groups within its membership, while giving direction to numerous student protesters. Attempts to create umbrella organisations in Britain, such as R.S.A. or R.S.S.F., were failures. The largest student organisation, the N.U.S., was opposed to the use of mass student protest for non-educational purposes until 1969, and even after that date it was not committed to revolutionary social change.

The reasons for this difference are debatable. It may be that the comparatively less extreme reactions of those in authority in Britain did not provoke the more militant response from students which appears to have occurred in other countries. It may also be indicative of the lack of a revolutionary tradition in Britain, in comparison to France, for example.<sup>32</sup> Whatever the reason, however, the difference existed, and it may have contributed to the reasons for the British student movement being comparatively small. It was noted in chapter 3 that students with a revolutionary outlook were



more likely to be more committed to participation in protest even though they did not represent the majority of students. In America, where revolutionary students represented a greater number and proportion of the student movement, there were 9,000 campus demonstrations in 1968-9, compared to only 400 three years earlier, when organisations such as S.D.S. could only claim 10,000 members.<sup>33</sup> This relative difference in the number of students who were sympathetic to revolutionary politics would seem to be important with regard to the number and of protests in different countries, though clearly other local factors were also important.

Furthermore, this difference also highlights a contrast in the aims of students in Britain and those in other countries which makes it difficult to blame student protest in Britain upon subversion by students from other countries. This was a common analysis among contemporary observers. Steve Chibnall, in his investigation into crime reporting in the British press, has made the mistake of identifying the British student movement as a revolutionary movement. Yet he has nonetheless noted that 'the whole development was profoundly confusing and worrying to politicians and leader writers steeped in the British political culture with its stress on tradition, due process, and appropriate channels. Why should privileged and intelligent young people be drawn towards such curiously un-British conduct?'. He argues that in order to answer this question

the press drew on statements of politicians (mainly on the Right) which identified the disruptive influence of foreign students and conceptualized the situation in terms of small cliques of militant wreckers and large bodies of moderate opinion...in the assumed

absence of the type of basic structural inequalities and conflicts which might supply a genuine reason for militant activity, student militancy is to be understood as a result of agitation by a small number of subversives who have undermined the 'good sense' of normally moderate students and persuaded them to act in irresponsible ways.<sup>34</sup>

Thus Sir Sydney Caine was reported as arguing that protests at American universities may have provided a model for the sit-in at the L.S.E. in 1967, while his colleague, Professor Brian Roberts, suggested that 'a number of American graduates are playing a prominent role in this. They began agitating a matter of weeks after their arrival here'.<sup>35</sup> Among the students, however, 'the American influence was recognised too, though given little weight'.<sup>36</sup> Just before the anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London on 27 October 1968, Thomas Iremonger MP 'was greeted with cries of "disgraceful" and "shame"' in the House of Commons 'when he said that the British people were fed up with being trampled underfoot by "foreign scum" and being offered as a sacrifice to alien agitators for no true cause'.<sup>37</sup> The day before the demonstration the front page of *The Times* warned that 'students enter Britain illegally for rally', while the following month Douglas Bader complained that among the foreign students who he believed were orchestrating student unrest in Britain 'some of them aren't even white, and if our students are going to be led by foreigners, all I can say is that its a dreary state of affairs that we can't get British students to lead these riots, if they are going to have them'.<sup>38</sup>

Not only do such comments appear to have been based upon an underlying racism, but they were patronising toward British students. The

implication appears to be that British students would not have become involved in protest were it not for the influence of foreign agitators. Not only does this deny that British students felt strongly about the issues which prompted them to protest, but it assumes that they had revolutionary intent when they did protest, and that they only had this intent because of their corruption by foreign students. It has already been established in chapter 3 that most British students did not have revolutionary aims when they took part in acts of protest. Moreover, while foreign students, particularly Americans, did take part in protests in Britain, they were few in number. In February 1967, for example, American postgraduate students at the L.S.E. handed a petition to the American Embassy asking for an extension to the halt of the bombing of North Vietnam which was then in operation.<sup>39</sup> In October of the same year ten American students returned their draft cards to the American Embassy, while in March 1968 seven American students at Oxford University held a five day fast 'as a symbol of grief over the situation in Vietnam'.<sup>40</sup> Such protests by foreign students were small and rare, as was their participation in larger demonstrations. The *New Society* survey of the anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London on 27 October 1968 found that 'the march was not a question of a vast mass of overseas activists. All but about 15 per cent, according to our sample, were British'.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, it is impossible to substantiate any claim that those foreign students who did participate in demonstrations were involved in conspiracies of any kind. Indeed, one American student who was a member of the Stop-It Committee (Americans in Britain for U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam) and who was a draft resister, complained to *The Times* about suggestions which were made in September 1968 that there was a

plot to use the 27 October demonstration for violent revolutionary ends. *The Times* reported that ‘militants behind the violence include American army “draft dodgers” and students from the United States, staying in Britain’.<sup>42</sup> The American student argued that ‘I am in contact with a large number of American draft resisters and students living here, and I can assure you that we are not in any way engaged in fomenting violence. Our actions have been limited to appeals to the British people to put a stop to the very considerable moral, material, and military aid which Britain gives to the U.S. in Vietnam’.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, there is no evidence to suggest that students were prompted to hold sit-ins as a result of agitation by foreign students. Indeed, the BBC programme, ‘Students in revolt’, which was broadcast on 13 June 1968, made it clear that such a suggestion was banal: the programme highlighted the basic linguistic problems of understanding students from several different countries and the fundamental differences in outlook which existed between revolutionary students. The *Guardian* argued that ‘political jargon, particularly left-wing political jargon, is hard enough to understand at the best of times, but when it is coming out in halting English it is beyond comprehension’.<sup>44</sup> The *Sun* commented that when Robert MacKenzie, the interviewer for the programme,

asked for a totally incomprehensible answer to be rephrased he got one twice as opaque. Students having second thoughts, drifted back to topics he had tried to discuss and desperately dropped. Again and again he was told “that is not the question.” “You have reversed the question.” “I am sorry” said the harassed man, “but will you give me a yes or no?” We should all live that long.<sup>45</sup>

Clearly, these student leaders were unlikely to have led student protest in countries which were not their own. It is impossible then, to identify the influence of foreign agitators, or the existence of an international conspiracy, as a motivation behind student protest in Britain.

Perhaps the closest that British students came to an international revolutionary conspiracy, which was influenced by foreign students and events, was the Angry Brigade.<sup>46</sup> This small group, composed mainly of students, embarked upon a campaign of bombing in the late 1960s, with the aim of triggering a crisis in the government of Britain, and eventual a revolution. The exact date of its first activities is unknown, and at first it appears to have used only small devices. Gradually, however, the bombs grew in size and their targets became more prominent, until their bombing of the house of Robert Carr, the Secretary of State for Employment, in January 1971, prompted a police investigation which led to their arrest. The trial which followed led to the conviction of eight people. They appear to have been influenced by French Situationists, and had links with revolutionary terrorist organisations in France and Spain.<sup>47</sup> It was also the case that similar organisations carried out terrorist attacks in other Western countries. In America, Weatherman, an off-shoot of S.D.S., was particularly destructive, while groups such as Baader Meinhof in Germany and the Red Brigades in Italy also evolved from student protest.<sup>48</sup> Yet these groups were much larger and more destructive in their actions than the Angry Brigade. The latter group was small, disorganised, and its campaign was short-lived and ineffectual in comparison with the campaigns of the other organisations named above. If this was the closest that British students came to

participation in an international conspiracy, as seems likely, then claims that British students were influenced by foreign students into taking part in protests do not appear to have been realistic.

The same conclusion can be reached with regard to the suggestion that British students only protested because they were copying the protests by students in other countries. Bernard Levin has argued, for instance, that 'it was not to be supposed that the unrest which, late in the decade, gripped much of the student body in the United States, France, Federal Germany and Italy (and to a lesser extent other countries) would leave British students wholly immune, nor did it, though as so often the student uprisings in Britain seemed a pale copy of those from whom the participants had got the idea'.<sup>49</sup> In May 1968 the *Spectator* noted that 'what is hard to guess at in 1968 is the part played by the instantaneous communications we now enjoy or endure. The swift passage of 'unrest' across' frontiers *may* be merely an aspect of the prevailing imitativeness of the global village, the ultimate in trendiness, in fact. Certainly it was to be assumed that street fighting in Paris would be followed by some sort of riot in London, and so it proved'.<sup>50</sup> This was also the line taken by the *Guardian*, which suggested that

'me-tooism' is beginning to play a rather obvious part in the student revolution. Any student community without a protest of some sort on the stocks invites the charge of complacency, and will be looking for a grievance. That a good many British universities, including some of the old and venerable and most of the new ones, are run in a remarkably liberal fashion does not count for much with the hard-core militants whose members have learned their business in California, West Berlin, and Paris.<sup>51</sup>

Claims that the events in Paris in May 1968 influenced students were quoted above, while similar claims about the influence of events during the sit-in at Berkeley University in 1964 included the *Guardian*'s headline 'LSE row runs to Berkeley pattern' during its coverage of the L.S.E. sit-in of March 1967.<sup>52</sup> In *The Times* a cartoon showed two protesters with placards, one saying 'Berkeley 1964', and the other saying 'LSE 1967'.<sup>53</sup> The sociologists Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison have even suggested that

the American student movement was in many ways the precursor and model for student movements around the world. It began in small-scale local conflicts concerning particular issues, which also expressed or would come to express general themes: the meaning and purpose of education, the role of the university in society, and the relations of subordinates to authority. While it is difficult to set an exact date and place to its origins, the Free Speech Movement at the University of California at Berkeley is both a convenient and a useful starting point.<sup>54</sup>

This may be an accurate analysis of the nature and development of student protests in many other countries, but it completely misses the point with regard to the origins of student protest in America, Britain or elsewhere, and it misunderstands the influence of events in America and other countries upon students in Britain, for example. Indeed, there is no evidence to suggest that students protested because they were copying students in other countries. The historian of France, George Rudé, has noted that historians have often viewed protests as the actions of 'the people' or of a 'rabble' or mob. Many of the

interpretations of the cause and nature of student protest which have been outlined above, including the suggestion that student protest was the result of 'me-tooism', have conformed to these two viewpoints. Yet Rudé has noted that 'they both are stereotypes and both present the crowd as a disembodied abstraction and not as an aggregate of men and women of flesh and blood'.<sup>55</sup> In this, and previous chapters, it has been demonstrated that this method of interpreting the student protest which occurred in Britain in the 1960s is clumsy and misleading. It was argued in chapter 3 that students in Britain did not protest because of a desire to copy student protests at universities elsewhere in Britain, and the same holds true for international student protest. Students protested because they felt strongly about established issues, and not because they wanted to conform, or they were swept along by events or group identity.

This is not to deny that events in other countries may have influenced British students, although previous interpretations have been seen to be mistaken, and British students do not seem to have participated in an international student movement. Instead, British students were given the example of methods of protest, and of challenging authority, as has already been suggested. As a method of protest, for example, the sit-in originated in the Civil Rights campaign in America. On 1 February 1960, black students held a sit-in demonstration at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Shortly afterward students across the southern states of America followed their lead and did the same at segregated bars and cafes in their towns.<sup>56</sup> Not only was this the first mass student protest to take place in America in the 1960s, but it would appear to have been a clear influence upon student movements around the world



for the rest of the decade. Like many protests later in the decade, these protests carried out by young people who felt that they could and should attempt to change something which they perceived as an injustice. As a method of protest, moreover, the sit-in was used by almost all student movements around the world in the 1960s, including the student movement in Britain. In France, for example, the student occupation of Nanterre University contributed to the immediate cause of the riots in Paris in May 1968, while Czech students occupied Prague University in December 1968 in protest at the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. It has been suggested that for other movements, the significance of the American Civil Rights movement 'lies in the techniques of protest and the spirit of militancy they engendered. Many American students, and a few British also, took part in Civil Rights activities, and some of them subsequently applied the same techniques (i.e., demonstrations, boycotts and especially sit-ins) within the universities'.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, this is hardly a major influence on student protest in Britain, and it does not represent a contribution to the cause of student protest. Similarly, it was argued above that protest in other countries gave British students the example of challenging those in authority. These protests in other countries demonstrated that those in authority were not always correct, and that it was both acceptable and possible for people, including the young, to challenge those in authority. This example may have been made more vivid and accessible by modern forms of communication. Yet this cannot be said to have been a direct cause of student protest in Britain either.

While British student protest does not appear to have been part of an international movement or conspiracy, or the result of copying those abroad,

then, it would seem that events in other countries may have had some influence upon British students with regard to challenging authority and their methods of protest. It is not possible to conclude, however, that this 'influence' can also be read as a 'cause' of student protest in Britain. The protests which took place in Britain did take place within an international context of parallel protests in other countries, but these protests were not connected in any way other than their novelty as challenges to authority by groups which had previously not done so. Furthermore, these conclusions also serve to confirm many of the conclusions concerning the causes of student protest in Britain which have been reached in previous chapters, notably the importance of considering the issues which students protested about, the non-revolutionary nature of most British student protest, and the patronising nature in which student protest was treated by the press and subsequent commentators. Perhaps most importantly, it further confirms the importance of the change in attitudes to authority which took place in British society in particular as a cause of the student protest in Britain in the 1960s.

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<sup>1</sup> For the French May see Daniel Cohn-Bendit, *Obsolete Communism* (Deutsch, 1968), C. Posner, *Reflection on the Revolution in France* (Harmondsworth, 1970), P. Seale and M. McConville, *French Revolution* (Heinemann, 1968), and Alain Touraine, *Le Mouvement de Mai ou le Communism Utopique* (Editions de Seuil, 1968). Marc Rohan, *Paris '68* (Impact, 1988) gives numerous examples of the posters, graffiti, and newspaper covers which were produced during the May events, and these provide a valuable insight into the nature of the collaboration between students and workers, and the nature of the challenge to the state.

<sup>2</sup> *Sun*, 20 May 1968, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Guardian*, 13 May 1968, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Guardian*, 13 May 1968, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Private Eye*, 7 June 1968, pp. 8-9. See in particular 'Student Power Mania, A glossary of terms'.

<sup>6</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, '1968, Revolution in the world system: theses and queries', *Theory and Society*, No. 18, July 1968, p. 431.

<sup>7</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914 - 1991* (Abacus, 1995), pp. 446-447. See also, Stephen Spender, *The Year of the Young Rebels* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), Julian Nagel (ed), *Student Power* (Merlin Press, 1969), Norman F. Cantor, *The Age of Protest, Dissent and Rebellion in the Twentieth Century* (Allen and Unwin, 1970), Margaret Scott Archer (ed), *Students, University and Society* (Heinemann, 1972), Gianni Statera, *Death of a Utopia: The Development and Decline of Student Movements in Europe* (Oxford University Press, 1975), K. Mehnert, *The Twilight of the Young: The Radical Movements of the 1960s* (Secker and Warburg, 1976), C. Levitt, *Children of Privilege: Student Revolt in the Sixties* (University of Toronto Press, 1984) and S. Burns, *Social Movements of the 1960s* (Twayne Publishers, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 19 April 1968, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> *Concourse*, 8 November 1968, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *VSC Bulletin*, No. 19, November 1968, p. 2, M.R.C., MSS 149, box 5, file 2.

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<sup>11</sup> *The Times*, 18 October 1965, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> *Birmingham Sun*, 30 November 1966, p. 2. See also M.R.C., MSS 21/97 for a poster by the International Confederation for Disarmament and Peace, advertising Human Rights Day.

<sup>13</sup> *The Times*, 23 October 1967, p. 1. *The Times* estimated that there were 60,000 demonstrators in Washington, 30,000 in Paris, 10,000 in Berlin, 8,000 in Copenhagen, 5,000 in Ottawa, and 4,000 in Sydney.

<sup>14</sup> *The Times*, 24 May 1968, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth A. Simon and W. Vance Grant, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1970 edition*, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (U.S. Government printing office, 1970), table 87, p. 67. For details of student protest in America see Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (Oxford University Press, 1995). For investigations into the causes of student protest in America see J. Freeman (ed), *Social Movements of the Sixties and Seventies* (Longman, 1983), S. Lipset, *Rebellion in the University* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), and S. Lipset, *Student politics* (Basic Books, 1967).

<sup>16</sup> These figures are taken from Adrien Dansette, *Mai 1968* (Librairie Plon, 1971), p. 31. There are, however, some disagreements about the number of students in university in France at the time. David Caute suggests an increase from 170,000 to 514,000 'in ten years', though the exact dates are not made clear. See Caute, *Sixty-eight*, p. 184. French government statistics suggest that there were 509,898 students in higher education in March 1968. See *Statistiques des enseignements, tableaux et information, Les Etudiants dans les universités, Année scolaire 1967-68, Chapitre 5, Fascicule 2, Ministère de L'Education Nationale, Service Centrale des Statistique et de la Conjoncture*, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Fraser, 1968, p. 79. See also Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (Random House, 1973), pp. 17-22 in which he discusses a number of causes of student unrest in America, including the growth in size, and the changing role of, American universities. He also discusses a number of the other causes of student unrest in America, none of which are applicable to Britain.

<sup>18</sup> Caute, *Sixty-eight*, p. 185.

<sup>19</sup> *Guardian*, 13 May 1968, p. 8.

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<sup>20</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 13 May 1968, p. 11. See also *The Times*, 7 May 1968, p. 1, and 11 May 1968, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> See *The Cox Commission Report, Crisis at Columbia: Report of the Fact-Finding Commission Appointed to Investigate the Disturbances at Columbia University in April and May 1968* (Random House, 1968). For an account of the violent end to the sit-in see J. Avorn, *University in Revolt* (Atheneum, 1968), pp. 185-199. See also Spender, *The year of the young rebels*.

<sup>22</sup> For accounts of the police actions at the Convention, which took place on 29 August, see *The Times*, 29 August 1968, p. 4, and 30 August 1968, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> *New York Times*, 16 May 1969, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> James A. Michener, *Kent State* (Random House, 1971).

<sup>25</sup> Fraser, 1968, p. 282.

<sup>26</sup> Fraser, *ibid.*, p. 266.

<sup>27</sup> Sale, SDS, pp. 50-52.

<sup>28</sup> For a full text of the speech see James M. Washington (ed), *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Harper, 1986), pp. 217-220. See also *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (Penguin, 1968).

<sup>29</sup> See H. Zinn, *SNCC* (Beacon, 1965).

<sup>30</sup> Sale, SDS, p. 664.

<sup>31</sup> Fraser, 1968, p. 260. See also L. T. Sargent, *New Left Thought: An Introduction* (The Dorsey Press, 1972) for a striking example of the ways in which the left in America differed in its outlook to the left in Britain. Perhaps most notable are the connections between the outlook of the American left and the counter-culture. These were very different to the attitudes displayed by the British left.

<sup>32</sup> See Eric Hobsbawm, *Echoes of the Marseillaise: Two Centuries Look Back on the French Revolution* (Verso, 1990).

<sup>33</sup> Fraser, 1968, p. 261, and Sale, SDS, p. 664.

<sup>34</sup> Steve Chibnall, *Law and Order News: An Analysis of Crime Reporting in the British Press* (Tavistock, 1977), pp. 90-91.

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- <sup>35</sup> *Guardian*, 15 March 1967, p. 1.
- <sup>36</sup> *Guardian*, 15 March 1967, p. 5.
- <sup>37</sup> *The Times*, 24 October 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>38</sup> *The Times*, 26 October 1968, p. 1 and *Listener*, 28 November 1968, p. 717.
- <sup>39</sup> *Beaver*, 23 February 1967, p. 5.
- <sup>40</sup> *Beaver*, 12 October 1967, p. 1 and *Guardian*, 5 March 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>41</sup> *New Society*, 31 October 1968, p. 631.
- <sup>42</sup> *The Times*, 5 September 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>43</sup> *The Times*, 7 September 1968, p. 9.
- <sup>44</sup> *Guardian*, 14 June 1968, p. 10. The students were Jan Kovan (Czechoslovakia), Luca Meldolese (Italy), Yasuo Iskii (Japan), Leo Nauweds (Belgium), Dragana Stavijel (Yugoslavia), David Cohn-Bendit (France), Ekkehart Krippendorff (West Berlin), Tariq Ali (Britain), Lewis Cole (United States), Alan Geismar (France), and Karl Dietrich Wolff (West Germany). See *The Times*, 13 June 1968, p. 10.
- <sup>45</sup> *Sun*, 14 June 1968, p. 8. See also *Daily Telegraph*, 14 June 1968, p. 1.
- <sup>46</sup> See Gordon Carr, *The Angry Brigade: The Cause and the Case* (Gollancz, 1975).
- <sup>47</sup> For further information on the Situationist attitudes which influenced the Angry Brigade see M.R.C., MSS 217, Socialist Reproduction, box 9. This was a Situationist group which was set up by Cambridge University students and which existed from 1966 to 1970. The archive provides numerous examples of the aggressive attitudes which appear to have been held by groups such as the Angry Brigade. In particular see copies of *King Mob* which are held in the archive. See also Peter Stansill and David Z. Mairowitz (eds), *BAMN (By Any Means Necessary), Outlaw Manifestos and Ephemera 1965-70* (Penguin, 1971).
- <sup>48</sup> See Sale, *SDS*, for a detailed account of the development of Weatherman. See also Erik Cohen and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, 'Counter-cultural movements and Totalitarian Democracy', *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 57, No. 4, Fall 1987, pp. 372-393, for a discussion on the various forms of protest in the 1960s and 1970s, including an investigation into the development of

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revolutionary terrorist movements. For the events in Italy see Robert C. Meade, *Red Brigades: The Story of Italian Terrorism* (MacMillan, 1990).

<sup>49</sup> Levin, *The Pendulum Years*, p. 268.

<sup>50</sup> *Spectator*, 31 May 1968, p. 736.

<sup>51</sup> *Guardian*, 10 June 1968, p. 8.

<sup>52</sup> *Guardian*, 15 March 1967, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> *The Times*, 16 March 1967, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach* (Polity Press, 1991), p. 115. For further details of the sit-in at Berkeley see S. M. Lipset and Sheldon S. Wolin (eds), *The Berkeley Student Revolt: Facts and Interpretations* (Anchor Books, 1965), Michael V. Miller and Susan Gilmore (eds), *Revolution at Berkeley* (Dell, 1965), Max Heinrich, *The Spiral of Conflict: Berkeley 1964* (Columbia University Press, 1971).

<sup>55</sup> George Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1981), p. 9.

<sup>56</sup> See Anderson, *Movement*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>57</sup> Stephen Hatch, 'From CND to Newest Left', in David Martin (ed), *Anarchy and Culture: The Problem of the Contemporary University* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 120.

## EPILOGUE



In 1970, amid the break-up of The Beatles, John Lennon complained that

the people who are in control and in power and the class system and the whole bullshit bourgeois scene is exactly the same except that there is [sic] a lot of middle-class kids with long hair walking around London in trendy clothes and Kenneth Tynan's making a fortune out of the word 'fuck.' But apart from that, nothing happened except that we all dressed up. The same people are runnin' everything, its exactly the same. They hyped the kids and the generation.

We've grown up a little, all of us, and there has been a change and we are a bit freer and all that, but it's the same things, selling arms to South Africa, killing blacks on the street, people are living in fucking poverty with rats crawling over them, it's the same. It makes you puke. And I woke up to that, too. The dream is over. It's just the same only I'm thirty and a lot of people have got long hair, that's all.<sup>1</sup>

If this was the case then it would be reasonable to assume that the events of the 1960s had no impact upon the events of subsequent decades. Yet Lennon's statement contrasts with that which was made by Jonathon Green, and which was quoted in the introduction, in which he asserted that 'something happened' in the 1960s. That idea has been confirmed throughout this thesis, so that Lennon's belief at the end of the decade that 'it's exactly the same' would seem to have been shown to have been inaccurate. The change in attitudes to authority which took place in the 1960s, and which the student movement exemplified, would seem to demonstrate the erroneous nature of Lennon's outlook. 'Something' did happen, and the student movement, or more specifically, the changes in attitudes to authority, did have an impact upon the events of the 1970s and 1980s, as well

as affecting attitudes to authority and the use of protest in political campaigns. Yet in the long term many of Lennon's comments may have proven to be correct.

Student protest in the 1960s may have been part of a transitional period in British politics, for example, in which the use of protest methods in political campaigns, and such direct challenging of authority, became accepted and was then used by campaigns such as the women's and the environmental movements. The Sociologists Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jameson, for example, have argued that 'both feminism and environmentalism are inconceivable without the student movement of the 1960s. Their reconceptualizations of nature and gender, and of social relations more generally, were impossible without the articulation of a more fundamental belief in liberation'.<sup>2</sup> It has been found in this study that the student movement was concerned with the desire by young people to be treated as equals by the older generation and by those in authority. Yet it is clear that many female students, for example, came to feel that they were not treated as equals by male students. Both Micheline Wandor and Ronald Fraser have established, through oral interviews, that many female students who participated in protests were treated as 'helpers' by male students, and were often sidelined into mundane chores, while male students made decisions.<sup>3</sup> Fraser has suggested that 'experience of the movement's sexism was undoubtedly one of the causes that led many women students to organise'. Thus Sheila Rowbotham, who became active in the women's movement, revealed that

the only way you could be accepted, as a politically active woman, was if you became like a man. I refused to become this sort of asexual political cardboard person. And yet I

noticed that it was almost impossible to get any of my ideas accepted by men. To begin with, I didn't think it was because they were *men*. And then an American, whose wife was involved in the women's movement, pointed out to me after a meeting in 1968 that it was the men who constantly blocked my proposals. Suddenly the scales fell from my eyes.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, John Westergaard, a member of staff in the Sociology Department at the L.S.E. in the late 1960s, who sympathised with the student protests at the School, has remembered that 'there were quite a number of seminars which the students set up themselves. They tended to be pretty chaotic, but they were intended to be chaotic. I mean, everyone was allowed to talk. *De facto* the men rather than the women. They were expected to keep rather quiet, or I mean, that was the hidden expectation. But anybody otherwise broke into the discussion at any point'.<sup>5</sup> It is perhaps notable, then, that when the BBC invited student leaders from across Europe to attend its 'Students in revolt' programme in June 1968, there was only one female student in attendance: Dragana Stavijel came from Yugoslavia. Yet this was not a reflection of a lack of involvement in protest or politics by women in Britain or elsewhere in Europe. It was noted in chapter 3 that proportionately more men than women took part in protest in the 1960s, though it is impossible to provide accurate statistics. Nonetheless, many women did take part in protest activity.

Further illumination of the position of women within universities and the student movement is provided by the treatment of women in the student press. A survey of 238 students at Warwick University in April 1966 found that 'the women seem to be rather more left-wing than the men'. This discovery provoked

the comment that 'I fear that the emancipation of women was a mistake'.<sup>6</sup> At Sheffield University female students held a demonstration outside the Lord Mayor's banquet in Sheffield in November 1968, 'in honour of fifty years of women's suffrage'. This was reported in the Sheffield University Students' Union newspaper, *Darts*. A photograph of a female student was featured on the same page as the report, which was described as a 'dolly bird' picture. The caption to this photograph read, 'this is Ann Wymer a first year Archaeologist relaxing in Western Park. As one *Darts* man said, "I wouldn't mind having a dig at her"'.<sup>7</sup> In November 1968 the *Manchester Independent* began a regular 'bird's nest' item, based upon photographs of female students. The first photograph was accompanied by a caption which stated that 'we found this bird in Owen's Union on a Saturday night'.<sup>8</sup> In the following edition, the 'bird's nest' included the comment that 'this weeks [*sic*] bird is gazing intently into the distance. We hope you'll be gazing intently into her direction'.<sup>9</sup> In January 1969 the same newspaper featured a photograph of a topless female student on its back page, and this was followed by a similar photograph in March 1969.<sup>10</sup> This was hardly indicative of a situation in which female students were treated with respect and as equals by male students. Similarly, it is notable that men occupied more executive places within students' unions than women. In many students' unions, such as Cardiff and Leicester, the post of Lady Vice President existed, but in every case it appears to have been a vague title with an undefined role. Anna Ford, who is now a newscaster for the BBC, was among the first women to become President of a Students' Union when she was elected to that post at Manchester University in 1966.

The student movement's influence upon the women's movement was therefore twofold. On the one hand student protest provided the example of the use of protest in order to challenge established norms of behaviour, hierarchies and positions of authority. This was true for those who had taken part in student protest and those who had not. In other respects, however, the position of inequality of treatment of women, among those who were seeking equality with members of the older generation and those in authority, highlighted the paradox in the situation of women within the student movement, and ultimately in wider society.

Thus, in 1969 groups of female students began to challenge this position of inequality, and attempted to use protest as one of the methods of achieving their aims. Clearly, the Suffragettes had used protest methods earlier in the century, but the protests and claims for equality which women engaged in as part of this 'second wave' of feminism were both a part of that tradition, as well as being influenced by the example of student protest in the 1960s. Indeed, female students played a prominent role in establishing women's groups and engaging in protest. In January 1969 the *Black Dwarf*, which had an overwhelmingly student readership, declared the 'year of the militant woman', and devoted a whole edition to women's issues. Its editorial argued that 'the first problem is to get women themselves to realise the nature of their own situation, since far too many have been so conditioned as to accept their multidimensional inferiority; the second step is to achieve a change in the attitudes of men, of left, right, and centre. The loosening of traditional ties has far too often replaced one form of

sexual oppression by another'.<sup>11</sup> Part of this process was the establishment of women's groups within universities. Sheila Rowbotham remembered that

the formation of small women's groups was a rebellion against large, student meetings where the men flaunted how revolutionary they were. We were rejecting that. We wanted a politics which would be acceptable to women who weren't like that. The idea that by sitting round [*sic*] and talking about your experience you could reach a social understanding of something wider was very important. At the same time, the fact that we were talking about oppressive relations connected up with the student movement which was concerned with relationships of authority between students and teachers.<sup>12</sup>

One of the first Women's Liberation Groups was founded at Warwick University in the Autumn term of 1969, with the hope of creating 'an effective local pressure group for research, propaganda and campaigning on general and specific issues affecting women'.<sup>13</sup> Later, similar groups were founded at other universities, such as the Birmingham Group, which grew from the student activism at Aston University and was founded in 1970. Among the subjects discussed at meetings were female sexuality, the problems of single women, and contraception.<sup>14</sup> A similar group was established at Liverpool University, and members of this group attended demonstrations in London and Liverpool on 6 March 1971 in anticipation of International Women's Day on 8 March. Among the demands which were made were equal opportunities in education in jobs, equal work conditions in terms of pay and promotion, equal legal rights, more nursery and child care facilities, and contraception for all who wanted it.<sup>15</sup> These were similar to the list of demands which were formulated at the national meeting of women

which took place at Ruskin College in Oxford in February 1970. The level of student involvement in the women's movement at this time can be illustrated by the observation which was made by one guest observer at a meeting of the women's group at Liverpool University in October 1971, that only 7 of the 200 women attending the meeting had not been to university.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, at a meeting of the Warwick University Women's Liberation Group, only 'about one third of the 50 or so present were in fact working women'.<sup>17</sup> Among the acts of protest by female students was a demonstration at Keele University in November 1971 by Keele Women's Action Group, against the employment of a stripper in the Students' Union. The demonstration was undermined, however, when eight male and female members of the Keele Performance Group climbed onto the stage and removed their clothing in front of the Granada television cameras which were attempting to make a programme about Keele.<sup>18</sup> In February 1972, fifteen female students disrupted a 'charity slave auction' of women at Liverpool University Guild. Tomatoes and flour were thrown in the violence which followed, and the auction was abandoned.<sup>19</sup> Female students therefore played a crucial role in the development of the women's movement in Britain in the late 1960s and early 1970s and this development was, partially at least, a result of the student protest of the 1960s.

Similarly, the student movement provided the environmental movement with the example of the use of protest, and many of its members in the 1970s had participated in student protest in the 1960s. Environmental and ecological issues had been of concern to many people before the 1960s: in Britain both the National Trust (founded 1895) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

(founded 1904), for example, were engaged in environmental conservation before the 1960s.<sup>20</sup> Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, which highlighted the dangers of DDT pesticide, was published in 1962 and both reflected and contributed to the existence of concern and awareness of environmental issues.<sup>21</sup> Yet the use of protest in campaigns over environmental issues was a new phenomenon in the early 1970s. Thus John McCormick, in his study of the *Global Environment Movement* has suggested that 'during the late 1950s and 1960s, a number of social and political issues galvanized mass publics - particularly the young - into protest, creating a new climate of heightened public activism from which environmentalism benefited'. He goes on to suggest that 'in both Britain and the United States, many of the young supporters of the environmental movement had been introduced to activism through the experiences of other protest campaigns'.<sup>22</sup> More specifically, Russell J. Dalton has argued, in his study of the development of the environmental movement, that

the overlap between the student movement and the environmental movements was also important in defining the activists and supporters of green causes. The student movement spawned a new generation of assertive young political activists who provided a leadership core for many of the newly forming environmental groups. Similarly, participants in the new wave of environmental action were heavily drawn from the university graduates of the 1960s and 1970s. The children of Europe's post-war economic miracle provided a base for modern environmentalism.<sup>23</sup>

It is perhaps not a coincidence, then, that more militant organisations such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, which were willing to engage in acts of



protest and even civil disobedience during their campaigns, were founded in 1969 and 1971 respectively, in the wake of the student protests of the 1960s.

While it may have been influential in prompting more militant women's and environmental movements, however, the student movement did not establish a long term tradition of student protest. It has already been suggested in chapter 2 that after 1970 student protest in Britain became less frequent, and declined in scale. This may have been for a variety of reasons, including the relative lack of success of student protests in gaining the amount of representation within university governments which many protesters hoped for, as well as the use of punitive measures, including recourse to the law, by universities. Indeed, while student protests continued to take place at universities throughout the 1970s, so too did the use of legal methods by universities in response. Thus 600 police were used to bring a peaceful sit-in to an end at Warwick University in May 1975.<sup>24</sup> The continued, though sporadic occurrence of protests by students in the 1970s, may have been indicative of the failure of students in the late 1960s to gain the desired levels of representation within university governments, and therefore to gain the voice within decision making processes which would have enabled universities to avoid such protests. It may also be the case that the belief that representation was the key to meeting students' needs within universities was misplaced, as was outlined in chapter 2. Whatever the case (see below), student protests declined in frequency and size throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s. In the 1980s, however, such protests became even less frequent, so that in the 1990s, student protests are rare phenomena. The sit-in has almost ceased to be used at all as a method of protest, and student attendance at demonstrations

has been largely restricted to several poorly attended and unsuccessful demonstrations by the N.U.S. against grant cuts or the introduction of student loans. Student apathy with regard to politics and students' union affairs continues to be lamented, but in the 1990s, unlike the 1960s, it is not broken by occasional mass participation in protest by the normally apathetic and the politically active alike. Yet while the student movement of the 1960s did not establish a long standing tradition of regular student involvement in protest, it has become identified as a halcyon period of student political activity. It is referred to with sentimentality during the few demonstrations which now take place, and it is harked back to when student apathy is discussed. Nevertheless, few students in the 1990s are aware of the details of the events of the 1960s, or of the issues which prompted students to protest. This aspect of the period has been represented in fictional literature such as Malcolm Bradbury's *The History Man*, and David Lodge's *Changing Places*, but these works have added to the artificial and often inaccurate media construct of what happened in the 1960s, and which many people, including students in the 1990s, appear to subscribe to.<sup>25</sup>

This decline in student protest activity has, however, been reflected and perhaps influenced by, changes in wider society. The student protest which took place in the late 1960s appears to have been the result of, and indicative of, the changes in attitudes to authority which took place in Britain in the 1960s. Students appear to have felt a sense of personal empowerment so that they could change decisions or actions by protesting. Yet such protest is now rare, both by students and other members of society. This may reflect a change in attitudes to protest as a result of a further change in attitudes to authority. Throughout the

1970s and 1980s a right wing backlash against protest movements, and the attitudes to authority which informed them, has taken place. For the student movement the backlash in the press, and in the actions of university authorities in the 1960s, has already been discussed. Governmental attacks took place in the 1970s: it was noted in chapter 5 that the Conservative government of the early 1970s, and in particular Margaret Thatcher, the Secretary of State for Education at the time, attempted to limit the powers and autonomy of students' unions in an attempt to prevent protests by students. Moreover, many institutionalised forms of protest, such as the industrial strike, have been attacked in the 1970s and 1980s. It may be, then, that protest activity is not seen as an acceptable form of behaviour in the 1990s by many people, or that few people feel the sense of personal empowerment which appears to have existed among students in the 1960s. This may help to explain the decline in student participation in protest in the 1970s and 1980s. Alternatively, it may be that there is no issue about which students feel sufficiently strongly about, to the extent that they are willing to take part in protests.

In this sense, John Lennon's comments, which were quoted above, may have proven to be a correct analysis. Student protest took place in the 1960s because of changes in attitudes to authority which made it possible for students to challenge those in authority, but those in authority retained their ability to challenge protesters. The resultant actions by those in authority may have been responsible for the perceived 'disempowerment' of many people, with the further result that few people, including students, take part in protests in the 1990s. Yet Lennon's statement assumes revolutionary intent on the part of people in the

1960s, and it has been found that, with regard to the student movement at least, revolution, or even the removal of the authority of those who were in authority, was not the aim of the majority of students.

It may be that attitudes to authority have changed in the long term, and that people in Britain are now less trusting of those in authority, even if they are less willing to protest about the behaviour of those in authority. It is impossible to quantify such changes. If they exist, then whether they are the result of the impact of the student movement, or, as seems likely, wider changes in society such as the change in attitudes to authority which took place in the 1960s and which the student movement exemplifies, is open to debate elsewhere. Indeed, in many respects the interpretation which has been provided here has been necessarily simplistic and lacking in detailed analysis because the discovery of the impact of the student movement has not been the main aim of this study. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated here that in some aspects, such as its impact upon the women's and environmental movements, the student movement of the 1960s did have an effect upon the events of subsequent decades.

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- <sup>1</sup> From *Lennon Remembers: The Rolling Stone Interviews by John Wenner* (Penguin, 1980, first published in America in 1970), pp. 11-12.
- <sup>2</sup> Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jameson, *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach* (Polity Press, 1991), p. 91.
- <sup>3</sup> Micheline Wandor, *Once A Feminist: Stories of A Generation* (Virago, 1990), and Fraser, 1968.
- <sup>4</sup> Fraser, *ibid.*, pp. 304-305.
- <sup>5</sup> Interview with Professor John Westergaard, 30 June 1994.
- <sup>6</sup> *Giblet*, 27 April 1966, p. 6.
- <sup>7</sup> *Darts*, 21 November 1968, p. 12.
- <sup>8</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 5 November 1968, p. 12.
- <sup>9</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 12 November 1968, p. 8.
- <sup>10</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 21 January 1969, p. 12, and 4 March 1969, p. 12.
- <sup>11</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 10 January 1969, p. 2.
- <sup>12</sup> Fraser, 1968, p. 307.
- <sup>13</sup> *Campus*, 5 December 1969, p. 9.
- <sup>14</sup> *Birmingham Sun*, 17 November 1970, p. 4.
- <sup>15</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 4 March 1971, p. 4.
- <sup>16</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 26 October 1971, p. 3.
- <sup>17</sup> *Campus*, 5 December 1969, p. 9.
- <sup>18</sup> *Concourse*, 19 November 1971, p. 1.
- <sup>19</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 18 February 1972, p. 3.
- <sup>20</sup> see John McCormick, *The Global Environmental Movement* (Belham Press, 1989), pp. 1-46.  
See also Peter C. Gould, *Early Green Politics: Back To Nature, Back To The Land, and Socialism in Britain 1880-1900* (Harvester Press, 1988).
- <sup>21</sup> Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Houghton Mifflin, 1962).
- <sup>22</sup> McCormick, *Global*, pp. 61-64.
- <sup>23</sup> Russell J. Dalton, *The Green Rainbow* (Yale University Press, 1994), p. 37.

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<sup>24</sup> *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 2 May 1975, p. 2; 9 May 1975, p. 2; 16 May 1975, p. 34, and 23 May 1975, p. 32.

<sup>25</sup> Malcolm Bradbury, *The History Man* (Secker and Warburg, 1975) and David Lodge, *Changing Places* (Penguin, 1975). See also David Lodge, *How Far Can You Go* (Secker and Warburg, 1980).

## CONCLUSION

At the outset of this study it was stated that the key aim was to establish why student protest took place in the 1960s. It was argued that the student protest which occurred in the 1960s was a new phenomenon, thus making it necessary to discover why it took place then, and not before. To that end, a number of interpretations by other commentators were examined, and it was found that many of these explanations for the origins of student protest were based upon guesswork and assumption rather than detailed analysis and research. It was possible to come to such conclusions because, unlike these simplistic causal hypotheses, the investigations which have taken place in this thesis have succeeded in establishing a detailed picture of the nature of the student movement and the protest which students took part in. In so doing it has been found that it is not enough to understand the incidental details of the events which took place, but rather that the student protest of the 1960s can only be understood within the context of the development of wider British society, notably changes in attitudes to authority. Yet these conclusions have been reached over many thousands of words, and therefore the provision here of a detailed summary of these findings would perhaps be of use to the reader.

The examination and undermining of the many alternative explanations for the origins of student protest has been an essential aspect of this thesis, and this process has assisted in the establishment of an understanding of the complexity of the student movement. The reader will have noted the diversity of these erroneous attempts at analysis, including suggestions that student protest was the result of rapid university expansion, family socialisation, the social background of student protesters, their supposedly revolutionary aims, or the



copying of the example of students elsewhere, both in Britain and abroad. Moreover, while these explanations have appeared, at first glance, to have been straightforward, it has been found that most of them have been used in different ways by different commentators.

This was the case, for example, with regard to the expansion of the number of students who attended university. While many observers, including the authors of the *Robbins Report*, hoped that this expansion would provide access to higher education for all who required it, some identified it as the creation of a university system which was geared to the needs of industry. For others, the expansion resulted in lower educational standards in line with the maxim that 'more means worse'. It was also assumed that there was a concomitant lowering of behavioural standards as large numbers of students from working class backgrounds attended university for the first time. Along with the strains which supposedly existed as a result of the rapid expansion in the numbers of students not being matched by a proportionate expansion in facilities and staff numbers, all of these considerations have been named as causes of student protest in the 1960s. Yet it has been shown that none of these hypotheses was correct, and that university expansion did not play a significant role in prompting students to protest. On the contrary, facilities and staff levels kept pace with expansion, and few protests were concerned with these issues.

Similarly, family socialisation into politics has been used in different ways in attempts to explain the occurrence of student protest. It was noted in chapter 3 that this theory has been used to suggest that students who protested were rebelling against oppressive parental practices which they had experienced

during their childhood, or that student protesters came from permissive backgrounds and were therefore challenging the restrictions in adult life which they had not encountered as children. It has been found that neither of these viewpoints is based upon accurate analyses, since it appears that both oppressive and permissive parenting were relatively rare, and that most students did not identify their parents as falling into these categories. Instead, it was found that students from a variety of backgrounds both did and did not become involved in protest activity.

This was also the conclusion which was reached with regard to the social background of students. It has already been noted above that working class students were identified as having been a disruptive influence at universities. Yet the stereotypical image of student protesters has been of middle class students who were rebelling against an undefined 'bourgeois' ideology. Again, neither of these explanations for student protests withstands closer investigation, since students from both backgrounds did and did not protest, and while it does seem to have been the case that more students from middle class backgrounds did take part in protests, this seems to have been a reflection of their greater number at universities in absolute terms, and therefore of their proportionately greater number as part of the student body. It does not seem to have had causal significance. Indeed, as with all of these deterministic hypotheses, it has been noted that they were patronising in their approach to the motivation of individual students and that they were naive in their understanding of historical processes.

In terms of the political allegiances of student protesters, it was again found that it is impossible to link this factor with decisions to take part in

protests. While it was acknowledged that students who participated in protests were more likely to be supporters of the Labour Party or other socialist groups, it was discovered that students with a variety of political outlooks engaged in protest activity. Furthermore, it was found that just as party politics were not a motivation for protest activity for the majority of students, the revolutionary parties of the far left could claim the allegiance of only a small proportion of the student body. It has been suggested by various commentators that the far left dominated the student movement, either as a minority which led the majority of students 'astray', or as a majority who were engaged in a revolutionary campaign. Yet it was found that the far left organisations were small and gained only limited support among students. It was concluded, however, that while student protest was not aimed at revolutionary change, the members of far left organisations did play an important role in provoking protests and encouraging wider student involvement.

With regard to the copying of other protests in Britain or in other countries, it was once again discovered that this was not a motivating influence for the majority of students. It was found that most students protested irregularly, and that few protested more than a small number of times. This is hardly indicative of conformity or copying, but rather suggests that students took part in protests which were aimed at issues with which they were concerned and about which they felt strongly. When these conditions were not present, then individual students did not take part in protests.

Indeed, the result of this investigation was that the stereotyped image of the student protester which had been in existence for some time was challenged,

undermined, and ultimately rejected. Contrary to the concept of student protests which many people subscribe to, namely that student protesters were middle class revolutionaries, involved in large numbers of protests, it has been found that most students in the 1960s were politically apathetic, that student protesters came from a variety of social and parental backgrounds, that few were revolutionary in outlook, and that students took part in protests on an irregular basis, and mainly in response to local issues and events. The student movement was complex, and cannot be understood in terms of simple deterministic theories based upon a lack of investigation.

Having established this, it might be tempting to seek an explanation for the occurrence of student protests in a detailed analysis of the logical development of events. Great detail of these events has been provided in this thesis, and in this sense this work has succeeded in providing the first detailed account of the development of the British student movement, and its many component parts, notably the anti-Vietnam War movement. Furthermore, it is possible to identify a logical development of cause and effect throughout events, and this is particularly important in the consideration of the role of those in authority in prompting students to protest. Nevertheless, students were not carried along by events. Most students, as was noted above, participated in protest activity only when they felt strongly about the issues concerned in each particular protest. These issues were usually not immediately relevant to the lives of the students who protested, and were often concerned with concepts of justice and democracy rather than personal gain. Yet while this does provide an insight into an aspect of the motivation of students who protested, it does not explain

why they protested in the 1960s and not before that date. After all, it was found in chapter 1 that universities had acted arbitrarily towards students throughout the twentieth century, though this behaviour did not prompt students to protest about this treatment until the 1960s.

This was also the crucial flaw in the suggestion by commentators such as Herbert Marcuse that students protested because they were separate from society and from the 'insane' world of post-war capitalist affluence. It is important to note that students in the 1960s did have the freedom from parents, the unrestricted working hours, and the financial security of state grants which made it more possible for them to engage in protests than any other group of young people in British society. This, however, had been the case for large numbers of students before the 1960s, and these students had not taken part in protests. When students did engage in such activity, these considerations were important in allowing them the freedom to give expression to their feelings of outrage, but they were not fundamental in causing the student protests of the 1960s.

Instead, the explanation for these protests was found by taking an overview of wider changes in British society, and applying the resultant observations to the incidents of the student movement. More specifically, it was argued that students would only protest when they felt that those in authority had transgressed limits of morally acceptable behaviour, and that it was both possible and admissible to challenge the decisions and actions of people who were in positions of authority. It was suggested that until the 1960s such challenges to authority were seen as unacceptable, particularly challenges by the young, who were expected to defer to members of the older generation. In the 1960s the

position of young people in society changed, most notably with regard to the increase in economic freedom and spending power which the young possessed. At the same time, those in authority were seen to make decisions which were identified by contemporaries as both mistaken and often morally. By the mid-1960s, therefore, it had become acceptable to growing numbers of young people to challenge the decisions and actions of those in authority, and to attempt to gain an official voice in government. Unlike previous generations, then, young people in then 1960s attempted to gain treatment as equals, and student protest was both caused by, and exemplified, this development.

It is in this sense that it is important to consider the issues which students protested about. With regard to the Vietnam War, for example, the British government was seen to have crossed acceptable moral boundaries by supporting American military intervention in Vietnam. Some students objected to the War from a pacifist stance, while others challenged the stated reasons for the military intervention which were put forward by the American government. Whatever the nature of the disapproval, it is notable that it was this identification of the engagement of those in authority in acts which were seen as morally unacceptable that prompted student protests, and that in the 1960s, unlike in previous decades, young people felt that it was acceptable for them to voice their objections and therefore to attempt to play a role in decision making processes. Similarly, protests by students who wanted to gain representation in university governments was aimed at improving the treatment which students received from universities by giving them an equal place within the academic community. For the first time, students were willing to claim that their opinions were just as valid

as those with an official place in governmental systems, and were willing to fight to gain a similar place. In so doing they actively took part in the government of universities and the reform of those institutions. It is only in the light of these changes in attitudes to authority in wider society, and of the position of the young in regard to that authority, then, that the student protests of the 1960s can be understood.

Furthermore, this is the factor which links the disparate protests which took place in Britain. The incidental details of each protest, whether at universities or in demonstrations in cities, differed on each occasion. All involved different participants, different immediate causes, different behaviour by those in authority and by protesters, and different issues. Yet all were linked in that they represented examples of 'disenfranchised' individuals challenging authority by protesting, in order to play a role in government. It is in this sense that it is possible to refer to a student movement in Britain in the 1960s despite the complexity of the movement and the absence of an immediately apparent central aim for the movement as a whole.

This aspect of the student protest which took place in Britain also provides a link with the events in other countries. It was noted in chapter 7 that the immediate causes of student protest in Britain were different to the incidental factors which caused student and other protests in other countries such as France and America. Yet this thesis is not concerned with promoting the peculiarities of Britain. While the British student movement must be examined in terms of the context of British society, and it is not possible to identify the existence of an international revolutionary conspiracy, it is possible to acknowledge that the

protests which occurred in other countries did share similarities with those in Britain. Whether they were civil rights demonstrations in America, or student riots in Paris, Rome, or Berlin, these protests took the form of young people, or other previously 'disenfranchised' groups, challenging the actions and decisions of people who were in positions of authority, and claiming equality with those people. It has been suggested in chapter 7 that the movements in other countries had different aims to the British student movement, and that many protests aimed at revolutionary change in the form of undermining those in government. In Britain, student protests seem to have aimed at the reform of government to include a role for young people. Nevertheless, it is possible to see the British student movement in a wider international context. Similarly, it is possible to see it in a wider historical context, as one example among many of people attempting to gain equality and having to challenge those in authority in order to get it.

This investigation has hopefully helped to clarify a number of aspects of the experiences of many people in the 1960s, and the role of the student movement within the events of that decade. The variety of contradictory, patronising, and mistaken explanations for the occurrence of student protest have been undermined here, and hopefully this will aid the attempts by other historians to understand and interpret the events of the 1960s, and the changes which have taken place in British society in subsequent decades. It has been found that the 1960s, and therefore their impact upon later events, were more complex than many alternative interpretations have allowed for. It is perhaps unlikely that this thesis will change popular attitudes to the events of the 1960s, which have now



become firmly entrenched, but nonetheless, it does provide a detailed insight into a series of events which have come to form part of the 'identity' of the decade.

## APPENDIX 1

### TABLES

**Table 1**

**Students in full-time higher education  
Great Britain 1900/01-1954/55<sup>1</sup>**  
Thousands

	University	Teacher Training	Further Education	All full time higher education
1900/01	20,000	5,000		25,000
1924/25	42,000	16,000	3,000	61,000
1938/39	50,000	13,000	6,000	69,000
1954/55	82,000	28,000	12,000	122,000

**Table 2**

**The expansion in the numbers of university students  
Great Britain 1960/61-1971/72  
(Former CATs included from 1965/66)<sup>2</sup>**  
Thousands

	Men	Women	Total	<i>Robbins Predictions</i>
1960/61	81,330	26,269	107,699	
1961/62	84,425	28,718	113,143	
1962/63	87,654	31,350	119,004	
1963/64	92,636	33,809	126,445	142,000
1964/65	100,381	38,330	138,711	156,000
1965/66	124,087	44,520	168,607	173,000
1966/67	134,443	49,760	184,203	187,000
1967/68	144,889	54,808	199,697	197,000
1968/69	152,796	58,498	211,294	200,000
1969/70	157,796	61,657	219,308	199,000
1970/71	162,125	65,831	227,956	200,000
1971/72	165,278	69,707	234,985	204,000

Table 3

Students in full time advanced further education,  
and full time College of Education students  
England and Wales 1962/63-1971/72<sup>3</sup>  
Thousands

	Further education	<i>Robbins predictions</i>	Colleges of education	<i>Robbins predictions</i>
1962/63	28,450		43,694	
1963/64	33,270	36,000	50,646	59,000
1964/65	39,630	39,000	58,396	66,000
1965/66	46,970	42,000	68,712	74,000
1966/67	54,490	45,000	80,225	80,000
1967/68	65,952	47,000	94,895	84,000
1968/69	76,369	48,000	102,785	87,000
1969/70	82,886	48,000	195,785	92,000
1970/71	87,769	48,000	107,315	96,000
1971/72	93,938	49,000	109,449	103,000

Table 4

Maximum Residential and Home Maintenance Grants  
Great Britain 1949-1970/71<sup>4</sup>  
Pounds (£)

	Oxbridge		London		Others	
	<i>Residence</i>	Home	<i>Residence</i>	Home	<i>Residence</i>	Home
1949	225	126	203	110	176	93
1952	263		234	160	210	145
1955	283		252	171	225	156
1958/59	325		280	192	255	182
1961	338	232	305	217	280	207
1962					320	
1965	370		370		340	
1967/68	370		370		340	
1968/69	395		395		360	
1970/71					380	

**Table 5**  
**University staff levels**  
**Great Britain 1953/54 - 1971/72<sup>5</sup>**  
**Thousands**

	<b>Professors</b>	<b>Readers +Senior lecturers</b>	<b>Lecturers +Assistant Lecturers</b>	<b>Others</b>	<i>Total</i>
1953/53	1334	1627	6471	1058	<i>10490</i>
1960/61	1627	2378	7399	1182	<i>13,580</i>
1963/64	1915	3019	9583	1927	<i>16444</i>
1964/65	2175	3508	11583	1501	<i>18375</i>
1965/66	2404	4163	14501	797	<i>21865</i>
1966/67	2639	4463	15564	943	<i>23609</i>
1967/68	2874	4750	16779	950	<i>25353</i>
1968/69	2984	5059	17136	888	<i>26067</i>
1969/70	3129	5257	17586	932	<i>26904</i>
1970/71	3354	5522	18133	965	<i>27974</i>
1971/72	3408	5895	18705	900	<i>28908</i>

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<sup>1</sup> *Higher Education*, table 1, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>For Robbins predictions see *Higher Education, ibid.*, appendix 1, table 53, p. 169. For all other figures see *Statistics of Education, Universities*, Volume 6, 1971, HMSO 1974, table 2, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>For Further Education up to 1966 see *Statistics of Education, Further Education*, Volume 3, table 4. For 1967-1972 see *Statistics of Education*, Volume 3, 1967 and series, table 3. The statistics used here combine 'full time' and 'sandwich' courses. For Colleges of Education from 1962 to 1965 see *Statistics of Education*, part two, 1962, table 32, and series. From 1966 to 1972 see *Statistics of Education, Teachers*, Volume 4, 1966 and series, table 1. For Robbins predictions, see footnote 2.

<sup>4</sup>From 1949 to 1958-59 see MRC, MSS 280, box 61, file 2 *Ministry of Education circulars*. For 1961 see box 78, file 4 *Ministry of Education circular*, 28th March 1961. For 1965 to 1970/71 see '*NUS Grants Campaign, Brief 2*', box 146.

<sup>5</sup>Up to 1964-65 see *Statistics of Education, Universities*, Volume 6, 1966, HMSO 1969, table 57, p. 102. Up to 1971/72 see *Statistics of Education, Universities*, Volume 6, 1971, HMSO 1974, table 35, p. 77.

## APPENDIX II

## **A Radical Student Alliance<sup>i</sup>**

We have set out here what we believe to be a programme necessary for the interests of students, for the removal of barriers to a full and democratic education, and for the greatest contribution of students to society and social progress. We invite student unions, all kinds of groups and individuals to express their opinions on it, and if they think fit, to associate themselves with our effort.

### **Student Rights.**

1. Students should have the right to complete control over their unions and funds, without interference, to elect their officers and representatives and determine their own policies.
2. Student should have the right to effective participation in all other decisions that effect them, notably in academic, financial, welfare and discipline matters.
3. Students should have the right to study free from financial barriers. This requires full and adequate maintainance [*sic*], without means test, for everyone in full time education over the school leaving age.



**Education.**

4. Education must be classless, integrated (not “tripartite” or “binary”) and comprehensive at all levels. Adequate remuneration to secure a sufficient supply of staff must not be delayed by the wage freeze, or incomes policy.

5. Undemocratic pressures on college government must be resisted; vigilance is need in respect of the influence of industry on research and education; college authorities should be more democratically composed to include representatives of students, non-professional staff and trade unions.

**Students and Society.**

6. Students as an organised body must be able to take collective action on matters of general social concern when there is substantial consensus of student opinion, for example action in opposition to racialism whenever it occurs and for the eradication of its causes in society.

7. There should be active co-operation with students in other countries, and in particular solidarity with those who are victims of oppression.

## **Students' aims and organisations.**

8. Lack of militancy and perspective have so far prevented student organisations achieving these aims. But no organisation is entitled by virtue of its own constitution to represent students. If an organisation is to speak for students it must be heard to speak for them, or in default others will. We propose to work through and outside existing organisations for the development of a democratic and active student movement, based on strong local and area union and organisations, autonomous and democratic.

9. Students need national unions closer to their members by virtue of frequent participation and involvement of *the membership in making and implementing* policy, lead by representative leadership rather than self perpetuating cliques.

10. Student society is not a closed one and a successful pursuit of these aims makes necessary co-operation with educational and other trade unions and professional associations, locally and nationally, for common aims.

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<sup>i</sup> This manifesto, which was written in October 1966, was quoted in 'The National Union of Students: The problems that face us', March 1969, MRC, MSS 280, N.U.S. Archive, box 142/MI, file 9.

## APPENDIX III

### POLITICAL SURVEYS

All surveys are in chronological order.

**Table 1     University College Cardiff, May 1962.<sup>1</sup>**

A random sample of approximately 500 third year students.

‘If you had a vote and there was a general election tomorrow, how would you vote?’.

Conservative	30%
Labour	30%
Liberal	18.4%
Welsh Nationalist	4.7%
Other	0.5%
Neutral	4.8%
Don’t know	11.6%

<sup>1</sup> *Broadsheet*, 10 May 1962, p. 7.

**Table 2     University of Leicester, October 1965.<sup>2</sup>**

A survey of 150 students.

Socialists	42%
Conservative	32%
Liberal	13%
Don’t know	11/12%

<sup>2</sup> *Ripple*, 21 October 1965, p. 8.

**Table 3     University of Warwick, April 1966.<sup>3</sup>**

A survey of 238 students.

‘If you could vote in an election tomorrow, how would you vote?’.

Labour	35%
Liberal	11%
Conservative	25%
Communist	2%
Others	2¾%
Abstain	18%
Don’t know	5.5%

<sup>3</sup> *Giblet*, 27 April 1966.

**Table 4     University of Leicester, March 1967.<sup>4</sup>**

A survey of 133 students.

‘If there was a General Election tomorrow, and you had a vote, how would you use it?’.

Labour	40.5%
Conservative	27%
Liberal	13.5%
Others	6%
Wouldn’t vote	8.5%
Uncertain	4.5%

<sup>4</sup> *Ripple*, 9 March 1967, p. 4.

**Table 5     University of Warwick, June 1968.<sup>5</sup>**

A survey of 100 students.

‘If you had a vote and there was an election tomorrow, for which party would you vote?’.

Communist	3%
Conservative	23%
Labour	32%
Liberal	26%
Other	16%

<sup>5</sup> *Campus*, 25 June 1968, p. 6.

**Table 6     University of Leeds, January 1969.<sup>6</sup>**

A poll of 546 students; 324 men, 224 women.

‘Which party would you vote for in a General Election?’.

Labour	22.5%
Conservative	35%
Liberal	16%
Communist	3.5%
Not vote	20%

<sup>6</sup> *Union News*, 24 January 1969, p. 1.

**Table 7     University of Manchester, February 1969.<sup>7</sup>**

A survey of 7 per cent of the Union membership.

i) Political sympathies of students, percentage of sample:

Extreme Left	Left	Centre	Right	Extreme Right	None
6	29	17	20	1	27

ii) Political sympathies according to Faculty, percentage of sample:

	Extreme Left	Left	Centre	Right	Extreme Right	None
Arts	7	29	17	18	1	28
Sciences	2	26	18	23	1	30

<sup>7</sup> *Manchester Independent*, 25 February 1969, pp. 8-9.

**Table 8     University of Liverpool, October 1969.<sup>8</sup>**

‘Extensive’ survey of students.

Conservative	28%
Labour	27½%
Liberal	12½%
Don’t know	14%
Will not vote	15%
Communist	1%
Others	2%

<sup>8</sup> *Guild Gazette*, 14 October 1969, p. 1.

**Table 9    University of Warwick, October 1969.<sup>9</sup>**

‘Which party do you intend to vote for at the next General Election?’.

Labour	28%
Not vote at all	24%
Liberal	13%
Conservative	9%
Nationalist	5%
Communist	1%
Undecided	20%

<sup>9</sup> *Campus*, 31 October 1969, p. 4.

**Table 10    University of Keele, May 1970.<sup>10</sup>**

A poll of 130 students.

‘How will you vote in the forthcoming General Election?’.

Labour	38%
Conservative	11%
Liberal	9%
Nationalist	2%
Communist	1%
Not voting	31%
Don’t know	10%

<sup>10</sup> *Concourse*, 29 May 1970, p. 1.



## APPENDIX IV

## QUESTIONNAIRE\*

This questionnaire is being sent to all Academic staff as part of research for a Ph.D. thesis on the *British student movement from 1965 to 1972*. The thesis involves an examination of student politics from 1965 to 1972, with a special emphasis upon protest, such as sit-ins, marches, etc. It also entails an attempt to examine the backgrounds of students and staff who participated, as well as the attitudes of those who did not.

Therefore, if you were a student or a member of Academic staff at a British institution of Higher or Further Education during the period 1965 to 1972, whether you took part in any form of protest or not, your co-operation in filling in this questionnaire will be greatly appreciated. All information will be of great value to my research, and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Indeed, you will note that at no point in the questionnaire are names asked for, and no means of identifying individuals, such as index numbers, is used. The information will be used mainly to provide statistical data, though any comments made may well prove to be useful.

The questionnaire is somewhat unusual in that it asks you to think back to your life between 1965 and 1972 and to answer as you would have done then, for all questions but 1 and 2. Obviously, this involves problems of memory, especially since many peoples' attitudes change over time. However, if you can try to remember accurately, and to avoid the temptation to answer as you would now, then your efforts will be appreciated.

One of the difficulties of the questionnaire is that many people were both students and members of staff during this period. In order to address this problem I have indicated which questions should be answered by those who were staff, and which for those who were students. Where no such indication is given it is assumed that both staff and students may answer it. Where specific events are being related, I would appreciate it if you could indicate whether you were a member of staff or a student when you participated.

If you cannot answer a question, please leave it blank. If you cannot answer the questionnaire, then please return it to me unused.

I realise that the questionnaire seems to be extremely long. However, most of the questions only require a tick in answer, and the questionnaire itself will be contributing to my attempt to answer some of the major questions about the period.

Thank you for your time and co-operation,

Nick Thomas,  
Ph.D. student, Centre for Social History.  
University of Warwick

Please answer each question by placing a tick next to the appropriate answer, or writing the relevant information in the space left underneath each question. If you wish to make any additional comments, or to qualify your answers, please write on the back of the appropriate page, making sure to specify the question to which you are referring.

1. Present Department

2. Age at last birthday

40 - 45

45 - 50

50 - 55

55 - 60

60 - 65

65+

3. Male/ female

4. Staff/ student 1965 - 1972.

5. Institution, department and time of study (undergraduate)

6. Institution, department and time of study (postgraduate)

7. Degree/s and subject.

8. Institution, department and time of employment. [staff]

9. Which of the following best describes the type of school attended by you?

Grammar, senior secondary.  
Technical, central.  
Secondary modern or junior secondary, elementary.  
Comprehensive, bilateral, multilateral.  
Direct grant.  
Independent (public or private).  
School or college overseas.  
Other (please specify).

10. In which of the following categories would you put the occupation of the main wage earner in your parental home ? [students only]

Professional  
Managerial  
Own business  
Clerical  
Skilled manual  
Semi-skilled manual  
Unskilled manual  
Other (please specify)

11. Which of the following categories best describes your social background?

Working class  
Middle class  
Upper class  
Other (please specify)

12. Which of the following categories did you use to determine class?

Family background  
Income  
Occupation  
Education  
Other (please specify)

13. Did your parents attend university? If so, please specify.

14. Do you have any brothers or sisters? If so please specify sexes and ages (i.e. older or younger than you).

15. Which of the following would describe your relationship with your parents? [students]

They allowed me to make very few of my own decisions

They gave me guidance, but did not interfere in my life too much.

They gave me a completely free hand in everything

Other (please specify)

16. Were your parents divorced/ separated at the time? If so, please specify which. [students]

17. Which party did your parents vote for in the Spring 1966 General Election ? [students only]

	Father	Mother
Conservative		
Liberal		
Labour		
Communist		
Welsh nationalist		
Scottish nationalist		
Did not vote		
Parent dead		
Don't know		
Can't remember		
Other (please specify)		

18. Which party or group most nearly reflected your own political views?

Conservative  
Liberal  
Labour  
Communist  
Welsh nationalist  
Scottish nationalist  
No opinion  
Other (please specify).

19. Were you a member of any of the following political parties?

Conservative Party  
Liberal Party  
Labour Party  
Communist Party  
Other (please specify)

20. How interested were you in national politics?

Very interested  
Moderately interested  
Slightly interested  
Not interested.

21. Were you a member of any of the following organisations/ movements?

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament  
Radical Student Alliance  
Radical Student Socialist Federation  
International Socialism  
International Marxist Group  
Situationist International  
Vietnam Solidarity Campaign  
British Campaign for Peace in Vietnam  
Anti Apartheid  
Women's Liberation  
Greenpeace  
Other (please specify)

22. If so, when?

23. What was your attitude to US involvement in Vietnam?

Strongly support  
Support  
Oppose  
Strongly oppose  
No opinion  
Don't remember  
Other (please specify)

24. What was your attitude to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament?

Strong support  
Support  
Oppose  
Strongly oppose  
No opinion  
Don't remember

25. What was your attitude to the campaign to legalise marijuana?

Strongly disapprove  
Disapprove  
Approve  
Strongly approve  
No opinion  
Don't remember

26. Were you ever an elected representative within the Students' Union?  
[students]

Yes/ no/ not applicable.

27. If yes, please specify.

28. Did you attend and/ or vote in Students' Union meetings on a regular basis?

Yes/ no/ not applicable

29. If so, how often?

Once a term

One to five times a term

Ten times a term.

Other (please specify)

30. Did you attend or take part in any Students' Union or University Societies?

If so, please specify.

31. What was your attitude to protests by students?

Strongly approve

Approve

Disapprove

Strongly disapprove

Indifferent

Don't remember

32. Were you involved in any of the following forms of protest? If you can give some kind of account on the reverse side of this page, giving as much information as possible concerning the date, then this will be extremely valuable.

Sit-in

Protest march

Protest meeting

Petition

Lobbying staff or Institution

Other (please specify).



33. How regular was your involvement in this form of protest?
- Very regular
  - Fairly regular
  - A small number of times
  - Once
34. Which of the following describes the issues involved?
- Vietnam war
  - Disciplinary procedures
  - Student representation
  - Facilities (please specify)
  
  - Politics (please specify)
  
  - Apartheid
  - Rhodesia
  - Student grants
  - Conversion of grants into loans
  - Other (please specify- space is provided on the reverse of this page).
35. What was your attitude to student claims for representation within Institutions in Higher and Further Education?
- Strongly disapproved.
  - Disapproved
  - Approved
  - Strongly approved
  - No opinion
36. Which of the following best describes the level of representation within the structure of your Institution?
- Very little
  - Some, but not significant
  - Significant
  - Very significant
  - Don't remember
37. If it was significant, was this the result of student action/ protest?
- Yes/ no

38. Which of the following best describes staff/ student liaison?
- Very poor
  - Poor
  - Good
  - Very Good
  - Don't remember
39. Which of the following describes your source of funding (tick more than one answer if necessary)? [Students only]
- State grant - fees only
  - State grant - fees and living expenses
  - Parental assistance
  - Private savings
  - Scholarship/ studentship
  - Other (please specify)
40. Would you describe this income as
- Very inadequate
  - Fairly inadequate
  - Fairly adequate
  - Very adequate
41. Would you describe student poverty at the time as
- Very bad
  - Bad
  - Not a significant problem
  - Not a problem at all
  - Don't remember
42. Which of the following describes your accommodation? If you lived in more than one type of accommodation please mark the year of study (second, third, etc.). [students only].
- Hall of Residence
  - Shared house
  - Lodgings
  - Home

Rented flat  
Other (please specify)

43. Which of the following describes the quality of the accommodation on the whole(mark more than one description if necessary)? [students]

Very good  
Adequate  
Poor  
Very poor

Messy/ untidy  
Clean

Overcrowded  
Spacious  
Small  
Large  
Well designed  
Badly designed  
Noisy

Disciplined  
Too disciplined

New  
Old

44. Did you have adequate facilities for studying in your accommodation/ elsewhere? [students]

Yes/ no

45. Did your Institution have a Students' Union building?

Yes/ no

46. If so, was it in the sole control of the Students?

Yes/ no

47. Were entertainments provided by the Union? If so, what? [students]
48. Which of the following best describes the quality of entertainments or recreational facilities? [students]
- Very good
  - Good
  - Poor
  - Very poor
  - Indifferent
  - Don't remember
49. Which of the following describes library facilities?
- Very good
  - Adequate
  - Poor
  - Very poor
  - Overcrowded
  - Didn't use the library
  - Don't remember
50. What was your opinion of hippies/ flower children?
- Strongly disapprove
  - Disapprove
  - Approve
  - Strongly approve
  - No opinion
  - Don't remember.
51. Would you have identified yourself as part of the hippie/ flower child cultural movement?
- Yes/ no

52. Which of the following best describes your musical tastes during this period? Specific examples on the reverse of this page will be very useful. Mark more than one description if necessary.

Jazz  
Blues  
Rhythm and blues  
Rock  
Pop  
Folk  
Soul  
Classical  
Other (please specify)

53. How would you describe your time in Higher/ Further Education (mark more than one description if necessary)? Students only.

Very poor  
Unhappy  
Enjoyable  
Constructive  
Educational  
A waste of time  
The best days of your life  
The worst days of your life

When you have completed the questionnaire would you please check that you have answered all of the questions. Then return the questionnaire to me in the attached envelope via the internal mail.

*Thank you for your co-operation*

\* This is the second version of the questionnaire, which was distributed in November 1995. It differs from the first version in only minor details, including small word changes, and the inclusion of question 33.

## APPENDIX V

## **The Revolutionary Student Socialist Federation<sup>i</sup>**

The Revolutionary Student Socialist Federation commits itself to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and imperialism and its replacement by workers' power, and bases itself on the recognition that the only social class in industrial countries capable of making the revolution is the working class.

Opposes all forms of discrimination and will lend its support to any group engaged in progressive struggle against such discrimination.

Commits itself on principle to all anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and anti-fascist struggles and resolutely opposes all forms of capitalist domination and class collaboration.

Will lend its support to any group of workers or tenants in struggles against the wage freeze and rent increases.

Constitutes itself as an extra-parliamentary opposition because its aims cannot be achieved through parliamentary means.

Extends to all students and organizations the invitation to co-operate with it in supporting and organizing for its aims, and extends fraternal greetings to organizations abroad already doing so.

Recognizes that the trend of modern capitalism to the increasing integration of manual and mental labour, of intellectual and productive work, makes the intellectual element increasingly crucial to the development of the economy and society and that this productive force comes into sharpening conflict with the institutional nature of capitalism. The growing revolutionary movement of students in all advanced capitalist countries is a product of this. To organize this vital sector as a revolutionary ally of the proletariat and as an integral part of the building of a new revolutionary movement, RSSF resolutely opposes ruling-class control of education and determines to struggle for an education system involving comprehensive higher education, the abolition of the binary system, public schools and grammar schools; the transformation of this sector requires the generation of a revolutionary socialist culture.

Believes that existing political parties and trade unions cannot either structurally or politically sustain revolutionary socialist programmes. It affirms that it is neither meaningful nor valuable to attempt to capture these organizations. While retaining support for their defensive struggles, it believes that new, participatory mass-based organizations are required to overthrow capitalism.

Believes that students will play a part in the building of such organizations and in the linking of struggles of existing militant groups. It sees its particular role as developing socialist consciousness among youth.

Believes that the institutions of higher education are a comparatively weak link in British capitalism, and that the ruling-class field of action can be severely restricted by correctly waged struggles for student control and universities of revolutionary criticism.

RSSF will build red bases in our colleges and universities by fighting for the Action Programme:

**ALL POWER TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF STUDENTS, STAFF AND WORKERS. ONE MAN ONE VOTE ON CAMPUS.**

**Abolition of all exams and grading.**

**Full democracy in access to higher education.**

**An end to bourgeois ideology - masquerading as education - in courses and lectures.**

**Abolition of all inequality between institutions of higher education - against hierarchy and privilege.**

**Break the authority of union bureaucracies and institute mass democracy.**

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<sup>i</sup> Quoted in David Widgery, *The Left in Britain 1956-68* (Penguin, 1976), pp. 339-340. It was adopted at the second RSSF conference on 10 November 1968.



## CHRONOLOGY\*

<b>Date/s</b>	<b>Events</b>
<b>1924</b>	
September	N.U.S. formed.
<b>1926</b>	
4 - 12 May	Most students are involved in strike-breaking during the General Strike.
<b>1933</b>	
March - November	'King and country' debate.
<b>1956</b>	
December	Students at Cardiff University march through Cardiff in protest at the Soviet invasion of Hungary.
<b>1958</b>	
February	Leicester University students hold a boycott of their refectory in protest against a lack of consultation on price increases.
17 February	C.N.D. formed.
Easter	The first Aldermaston march takes place.
<b>1959</b>	
Easter	Aldermaston march.
<b>1960</b>	
February	Cardiff University SU votes to boycott South African goods in protest against apartheid.
1 February	The first sit-in at Woolworths in Greensboro, North Carolina, takes place.

April	Student Non-violent (later National) Co-ordination Committee (S.N.C.C.) formed.
Easter	Aldermaston march.
May	Report of the Anderson Committee on <i>Grants to students</i> .
October	The Committee of 100 is formed.
20 October - 2 November	The trial of Penguin Books for their attempt to publish <i>Lady Chatterley's Lover</i> .
31 December	National Service ends.

### **1961**

30 January	The contraceptive pill goes on sale.
18 February	First direct action by the Committee of 100. 20,000 people take part in a demonstration, and 5,000 of these then hold a sit-down demonstration outside the Ministry of Defence.
29 April	Committee of 100 demonstration at Parliament Square.
6 August	The Committee of 100 holds a Hiroshima Day rally in Hyde Park.
20 - 31 August	The Berlin Wall is built.
12 September	Bertrand Russell is imprisoned for a week, having been convicted of inciting the public to civil disobedience.
17 September	The Committee of 100 holds a sit-down demonstration in Trafalgar Square, with 12,000 people in attendance, of which 1,314 are arrested. A further 351 are arrested at a sit-down demonstration at the nuclear submarine base at Holy Loch.
18 October	4,000 take part in a C.N.D. lobby of Parliament.
4 December	The contraceptive pill becomes available on the NHS.
9 December	200 students and 300 others hold a sit-down demonstration in Cardiff. It is organised by the Committee of 100.

### **1962**

July 1962	Port Huron Statement by the American student organisation Students for a Democratic Society (S.D.S.).
15 October	Amnesty International is formed.
22 - 28 October	The Cuban missile crisis.
24 October	Demonstration by students outside the American Consulate in Cardiff over the Cuban missile crisis.
24 November	<i>That was the week that was</i> is first shown on BBC television.

## 1963

2 March	'Please Please Me' reaches number 1 in the UK singles charts.
March - December	The Profumo affair. John Profumo resigns on 5 June. Stephen Ward dies on 3 August. Christine Keeler is imprisoned on 6 December.
15 April	The C.N.D. Easter March in London attracts 50,000 demonstrators.
28 August	Martin Luther King delivers his 'I have a dream' speech to a demonstration by 250,000 Civil Rights protesters in Washington D.C..
26 September	The publication of Lord Denning's report on the Profumo affair.
October	The <i>Robbins Report</i> is published.
22 November	President Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas.

## 1964

18 May	Mods and Rockers clash at Brighton, Margate, Southend, Clacton and Bournemouth.
April	1300 students at Aberystwyth go on strike in protest at the College's refusal to give permission for a bar.
September	Sit-in at Berkeley, California.
16 October	Harold Wilson wins the General Election.
14 November	57 Leicester University students hold a sit-in and demonstration at a Leicester pub over an alleged 'colour bar'.

28 November	140 students take part in an anti-Apartheid demonstration in Leicester
30 November	6,000 people take part in an anti-Apartheid torchlit march in London.
10 December	Martin Luther King wins the Nobel Peace Prize.
21 December	The death penalty is abolished.

## **1965**

21 February	Malcolm X is assassinated.
27 February	Students in Cardiff demonstrate against the 'dangerous situation' in Vietnam and ask for free elections and the withdrawal of foreign intervention.
1 March	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London.
8 March	U.S. forces directly engaged in fighting in Vietnam.
12 March	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London. Protesters chain themselves to the railings of the U.S. Embassy.
19 March	Demonstration in Leicester against the tour of the South African Hockey team.
4 April	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London. There are 15 arrests.
20 May	The British Council for Peace in Vietnam is launched.
29 May	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London by C.N.D.. The march is led by Joan Baez.
16 June	Teach-in at the Oxford Union on Vietnam. It is the first teach-in in British history.
25 June	Teach-in on Vietnam at Liverpool University followed by a march through Liverpool.
June 31	Students hold a teach-in on Vietnam in Westminster Hall, while a lobby of MPs takes place at Westminster.
July 1965 - February 1966	The 'Glasgow affair'.

15 October	Anti-Vietnam War march through Manchester by 70 students.
16-17 October	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London, simultaneous with protests world-wide. There are 78 arrests.
November	Series of three mass meetings of women students at Liverpool University in favour of more relaxed rules in Halls of Residence.
11 November	Rhodesia declares independence.
11 November	Demonstration on Rhodesia in London by L.S.E. students.
12 November	Demonstration in Manchester by 300 students on Rhodesia.
13 November	Protest march by students through Leeds over Rhodesia.
19 November	Teach-in on Rhodesia at Liverpool University.
26 November	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in Birmingham.
27 November	Anti-Vietnam War demonstrations in London and Manchester.
December	U.S. troop levels in Vietnam reach 185,000.

## **1966**

15 January	The Trips Festival takes place in San Francisco and founds the Hippie movement.
12 February	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London by the Committee of 100. Protesters try to storm the House of Commons and 21 are arrested.
5 March	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in Leeds.
1 April	Harold Wilson wins the General Election and increases his previously small majority to 99.
15 April	<i>Time</i> magazine calls London 'Swinging London'.
5 May	Demonstration against the installation of the Duchess of Kent as Chancellor of Leeds University. 13 students are arrested. There is also a demonstration against the conferment of an honorary degree upon the Foreign Secretary, Michael Stewart.
14 May	Y.C.N.D. hold an anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London.

21 May	60 students take part in a demonstration in Leicester on Rhodesia.
June	Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (V.S.C.) is launched.
3 July	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London by 2,000 people, many of them members of Youth for Peace in Vietnam. There are 31 arrests.
13 July	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration against Harold Wilson as he collects an honorary degree from Sussex University.
17 July	Youth for Peace in Vietnam demonstration in London.
September	Formation of the Radical Students Alliance (R.S.A.)
20 September	Eight London theatres have performances interrupted by anti-Vietnam War demonstrations by members of the Vietnam Action Group. None are students.
29 September	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration by V.S.C. outside Transport House.
October	Teach-in on Vietnam at Liverpool University is attended by 400 students.
	Publication of <i>Agitator</i> Report on Walter Adams at the L.S.E..
2 October	Harold Wilson shouted down by anti-Vietnam War protesters while giving the lesson at a church in Brighton. The protesters are members of the Vietnam Action Group and none are students.
10 October	<i>It</i> launched.
14 - 16 October	Youth for Peace in Vietnam demonstrations in London.
4 November	Demonstration against Harold Wilson being installed as Chancellor of Bradford University.
11 November	300 L.S.E. students attend a march in London to mark the anniversary of Rhodesia's declaration of independence.
12 November	Rhodesia demonstration in Birmingham.
13 November	Demonstration in London against the Smith regime in Rhodesia.
16 November	Launch of the International War Crimes Tribunal (I.W.C.T.).

- December U.S. troop levels in Vietnam reach 389,000.
- 9 December Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in Manchester.
- 10 December Human Rights Day. Demonstration at U.S.A.F. base at Ruislip, torchlit procession through London to St. Paul's, letter sent to Lyndon Johnson entitled 'three steps to peace in Vietnam'.
- 17 December Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London.
- 21 December Proposed rise in fees of overseas students is announced in Parliament.
- 28 December Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London by the Committee of 100.

### *1967*

- 4 January N.U.S. sends a letter to the government complaining about the proposed increase in overseas students' fees.
- 18 January Keele University Students' Union disaffiliates from the N.U.S..
- 21 January Salford University Students' Union disaffiliates from the N.U.S..
- 25 January *Removal of Labour Party financial support for N.A.L.S.O.*
- 30 January George Martin, President of N.U.S., releases a letter to the press condemning R.S.A..
- 1 February 3,000 - 4,000 students attend an R.S.A. demonstration in London against the increase in overseas students' fees. A small N.U.S. lobby of Parliament is held at the same time.
- 4 February Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in Birmingham.
- 11 February Pacifist demonstration at a store in Leicester against an army recruiting exhibition leads to violence.
- 13 February National Students Association of America admits contacts with and funding by the C.I.A.. This raises questions about the funding of the International Student Conference (I.S.C.), and therefore of the N.U.S..
- 17 February Students from Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities march through Glasgow in protest against the proposed rise in overseas students'



fees.

18 February	Follow-up demonstration in Leicester.
22 February	Mass demonstrations across the country in protest at the planned increase in overseas students' fees.
23 February	Demonstration at Leeds University against Walt W. Rostow, advisor to Lyndon Johnson.
13 March	Sit-in at the L.S.E..
27 March	The C.N.D. Easter March in London takes the form of an anti-Vietnam War demonstration by 10,000 people.
21 April	A military coup in Greece results in the establishment of a fascist military regime. Demonstrations take place outside the Greek Embassy.
1 May	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London by the Committee of 100. The participants are not students.
10 May	Verdict of the I.W.C.T. finds America guilty of war crimes.
15 May	British and European students hold a TV satellite debate on Vietnam with Senator Robert Kennedy and Governor Ronald Reagan.
21 May	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London by Youth for Peace in Vietnam.
1 June	'Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' is released.
25 June	Mohammed Ali is sentenced to five years in prison for refusing the draft.
27 June - 2 July	Angry Arts Week at the Roundhouse in London, in protest at the Vietnam War.
29 June	Mick Jagger and Keith Richard are imprisoned on drug charges.
2 July	Anti-Vietnam demonstration in London by V.S.C..
15 July - 30 July	The 'Dialectics of liberation' conference at the Roundhouse in London.
16 July	'Legalise Pot' rally in Hyde Park.
22 July	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration at Royal Ascot.

13 August	Hippie 'love-in' at Slough.
25-27 August	'Festival of the Flower Children' at Woburn Abbey.
October	Publication of the N.U.S. investigation into possible C.I.A. infiltration. It finds no evidence to suggest this.
16 October	Ten American students return their draft cards to the US Embassy.
22 October	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration by C.N.D. in London is attended by 4,000 people as part of protests world-wide.
November	5 students arrested in protests in Cardiff against the expenditure on the investiture of the Prince of Wales. Ten others are arrested. The demonstration is organised by the National Patriotic Front.
11 November	700 attend an anti-Polaris demonstration at Barrow-in-Furness.
24 November	Manchester University students boycott their refectory and demand more control.
December	U.S. troop levels in Vietnam reach 463,000.
8 December	Violent demonstration at Liverpool University against a speaker from the South African Foundation, who spoke in favour of Apartheid.

## *1968*

16 January	Sit-in and demonstration at Aston University.
23 January	Violent demonstration by 2,000 students against Harold Wilson in Sheffield.
24 January	N.U.S. launches a grants campaign following the governments' decision to cut grant increases. It decides on the campaign after George Martin had asked students to accept the cuts unconditionally.
31 January	Têt Offensive begins in Vietnam.
February	Violence during demonstrations in Germany at Berlin, Freiburg, Hamburg, Munich, Bremen, Duisberg, Kiel, Frankfurt, and Bonn.
3 February	Demonstration in Birmingham by more than a hundred people, against apartheid in South Africa.

21 February	U.S. Embassy press liaison officer splashed with red paint by anti-Vietnam War demonstrators after a teach-in on Vietnam at Sussex University.
26 February - 29 February	Sit-in at Leicester University.
28 February	Demonstration against Enoch Powell at Essex University. During the protest, an iron bar is thrown at Powell's car.
1 March	Three members of Liverpool University Guild Grants Action Committee discuss cuts in grant increases with Secretary of State for Education, Patrick Gordon Walker, while on a train from Liverpool to Manchester. They hand him a petition of 800 signatures.
1 March	At Manchester University Patrick Gordon Walker is shouted down by protesters.
1 - 12 March	Rome University is occupied
3 March	2,000 students attend a demonstration in London as part of the N.U.S. grants campaign.
7 March	Students at Sussex University burn the U.S. flag in an anti-Vietnam War demonstration.
8 March	Demonstration against Dennis Healey at Cambridge University. His car is attacked by demonstrators.
13 March	1,000 students take part in an N.U.S. lobby of Parliament as part of the grants campaign.
13 March	Sit-in at Manchester University.
17 March	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London by V.S.C..
18 March	600 students and 40 staff at Sussex University stage a 72-hour 'peace fast' in protest at the war in Vietnam.
31 March	President Lyndon Johnson announces that he will not seek re-election.
4 April	Assassination of Martin Luther King.
12 - 15 April	Students in Germany riot after the attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke.
20 April	Enoch Powell makes his 'rivers of blood' speech in Birmingham.

23 - 30 April	Occupation of Columbia University in New York.
26 April	250 L.S.E. students march on Enoch Powell's house.
May	University occupations and demonstrations take place across Germany in opposition to the passing of Emergency Laws on 30 May.
1 May	<i>Black Dwarf</i> is launched.
3 May	Beginning of student riots in Paris.
3 May	Demonstration at Leeds University against Patrick Wall MP.
7 May	Demonstration at Essex University against Dr. T. Inch of Porton Down.
10 May	Enoch Powell forced to cancel speech at Liverpool University due to the threat of violence. He has already had to cancel similar engagements at Cambridge University and the L.S.E..
20 May	General Strike in France.
21 May	Manchester University students march through Manchester in support of French students.
24 - 25 May	Sit-in at the L.S.E. in support of French students. At one point the anarchist flag flies over the School.
28 May - 8 July	Occupation of Hornsey College of Art. It is the longest sit-in in British history.
30 May - 12 June	Sit-in at Hull University.
June 1968 - January 1969	Sit-in at Tokyo University
5 June	Assassination of Robert Kennedy.
5 June	Occupation of the Guildford College of Art.
12 June	General De Gaulle bans demonstrations.
13 June	BBC 1 broadcasts its 'Students in revolt' programme.
14 June	At Bradford University, students from Leeds and Bradford

	Universities shout down Duncan Sandys MP.
14 - 15 June	Foundation conference of the Revolutionary Student Socialist Federation (R.S.S.F.).
19 June	Demonstration against Enoch Powell at Birmingham University.
25 - 28 June	Sit-in at Leeds University.
30 June	General De Gaulle wins elections in France by a landslide.
10 July	Dr. Benjamin Spock is imprisoned for assisting draft dodgers.
21 July	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London.
12 August	Race riots take place in Watts, Los Angeles.
21 August	Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.
22 August	3,000 take part in a demonstration outside the Russian Embassy.
24 August	Labour Party rally in Hyde Park against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia attended by 10,000 people.
29 August	Police attack protesters at the Democratic Party convention in Chicago.
September	Rioting in Mexico City.
26 September	Theatre censorship is abolished.
27 September	The cast of <i>Hair</i> appear naked on stage in London.
7 October	Students at Leicester University are involved in scuffles during a demonstration against the visit of the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Captain Terence O'Neill.
7 October	Joint Statement from the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals and the National Union of Students.
14 October	Demonstration in Manchester against police brutality in Mexico.
15 October	400 women protest outside the U.S. Embassy against the imprisonment of Dr. Benjamin Spock.
17 October	American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos give the 'black power' salute during their award ceremony at the Mexico Olympics. They are immediately withdrawn from the US team.

23 October	Demonstration against Enoch Powell at Exeter University.
24 October	300 students at Cardiff University hold a demonstration in Cardiff in favour of a public inquiry into Guildford and Hornsey Colleges of Art.
24 October	L.S.E. occupied in order to provide medical facilities for the V.S.C. demonstration on 27 October.
27 October	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London by 100,000 people.
6 November	Richard Nixon elected President of the United States.
8 November	Demonstration at Leeds University against Patrick Wall MP.
8 November	Violent demonstration against Enoch Powell at Cardiff University.
16 November	All night vigil on the steps of Manchester University Union by Amnesty International.
27 November - 5 December	Sit-in at Birmingham University.
5 December - 16 December	Sit-in at Bristol University.
17 December	Czech students occupy Prague University in protest at the Soviet occupation.

## ***1969***

January	22 Manchester University students boycott their exams.
16 January	Self immolation of Jan Palach in Prague in protest against the Russian occupation of Czechoslovakia.
17 January	Demonstration against Enoch Powell in Sheffield.
20 January	Demonstration against Enoch Powell in Oxford.
24 January	Security gates at the L.S.E. are taken down by students. Thirty are arrested and taken to Bow Street Police Station, outside which 200 students hold a sit-down demonstration in the road.
27 January	Sit-in at Warwick University in support of L.S.E. students.

29 - 31 January	Sit-in at Cambridge University in support of L.S.E. students.
29 January	Sit-in at Essex University in support of L.S.E. students.
29 - 30 January	Sit-in at Liverpool University.
February	75 students at Liverpool University picket Toxteth docks in protest at the shipment of arms to Nigeria for use in the war against Biafra.
3 February	Walter Adams shuts the L.S.E..
20 February	The L.S.E. re-opens.
1 March	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in Sheffield attended by 1,000 people, mainly students.
7 March	Four Welsh students hold a 102 hour fast at Aberystwyth in protest against the Prince of Wales' investiture.
10 March	Sit-in at Liverpool University by 200 students over rules in Halls of Residences.
13 March	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration at Elliott Automation Ltd. in Leeds. The company supplies material for the American war effort.
14 March	Sit-in at Sussex University in support of L.S.E. students.
16 March	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London by 4,000 people.
30 March	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London by 300 people.
April	U.S. troop levels in Vietnam reach a peak of 543,000.
	Jack Straw is elected President of N.U.S. and Clause 3 of the N.U.S. Constitution is changed.
1 April	Students at Hornsey College of Art hold a mock funeral procession after the failure of the sit-in.
24 April	Students at Essex University disrupt the hearing of the Parliamentary Select Committee on 'Student relations'.
15 May	Riots at Berkeley, California over 'People's Park'.
8 June	U.S. troop cuts of 25,000 announced. America begins to withdraw from Vietnam.
14 - 17 August	400,000 people attend the Woodstock Festival.

26 - 31 August	200,000 people attend the Isle of White Festival.
21 September	The squat at 144 Piccadilly is raided.
29 September	Students from Birmingham University disrupt the presentation of an honorary degree to Sir Humphrey Gibbs, former Governor of Rhodesia.
15 October	The Moratorium on Vietnam takes place in America.
21 October	Five students are arrested after violent clashes at University of London Senate House.
26 October	1,500 people take part in a demonstration in London against arms sales to Nigeria which are being used in the war against Biafra.
8 November	Anti-Springbok rugby tour demonstration in Leicester attended by 2,000 people..
13 November	The <i>Daily Telegraph</i> publishes the first reports of the My Lai massacre.
15 November	1000 students protest in Swansea against the South African rugby team. There are 67 arrests and over 100 injuries.
22 November	Anti-Vietnam demonstration and moratorium in Liverpool.
23 November	Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London by V.S.C.. The demonstration only attracts 1,600 people, though 1,000 police are also in attendance.
25 November	John Lennon returns his M.B.E. in protest at the Vietnam War, Biafra, and because 'Cold Turkey' has slipped from 15 to 18 in the Top 20.
27 November	5,000 people take part in an anti-Springbok demonstration in Manchester.
3 December	3,500 students from Liverpool College of Education march through Liverpool in support of teachers' pay claims.
6 December	At a festival in Altamont a member of the crowd is killed by Hells Angels 'guards' during the performance by the Rolling Stones.
13 December	Demonstration in Cardiff against the South African Rugby team.



## **1970**

1 January	The Age of Majority is reduced from 21 to 18.
6 January	Anti-Springbok tour demonstration in Coventry.
12 January	The Angry Brigade bombs the house of Robert Carr, Secretary of State for Employment.
24 January	3,000 protest in Cardiff against the South African rugby team.
10 February	Sit-in at Liverpool University against the visit of the Chancellor, Lord Salisbury.
3 February	Sit-in at Warwick University.
11 - 13 February	Sit-in at Warwick University. Files discovered.
13 February	Garden House Hotel demonstration in Cambridge.
26 February - 12 March	Sit-in at Manchester University.
5 March	70 people in Liverpool in protests against anti-semitic policy in the Soviet Union.
9 March - 19 March	Sit-in at Liverpool University.
10 - 11 March	Sit-in at Birmingham University.
13 March	8 students at Birmingham University go on hunger strike in protest at the University's funding of a segregated hospital in Rhodesia. The information came from the Warwick files.
10 April	Paul McCartney announces the break-up of the Beatles.
May	A week of direct action in Birmingham by Aston University and Birmingham Polytechnic students in favour of the Polytechnic being sited on the Aston University campus. Action includes marches and two occupations of Margaret Street Educational Buildings. The occupiers are forcibly removed by police on both occasions.
1 May	1,500 - 2,000 students march through Liverpool in protest at University victimisation of students after the sit-in in March.
4 May	Four students are shot dead by the National Guard at Kent State

University, Ohio.

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|-------------|---|
| 19 June     | Edward Heath wins the General Election.   |
| 26 June     | Vote of no confidence in the Vice Chancellor of Warwick University by the Assembly.   |
| 18 November | 400 Liverpool University students march through Liverpool in protest against the visit of the South African Trade Delegation. |
| 20 November | Feminists disrupt the Miss World contest at the Albert Hall.  |
| 27 November | The Gay Liberation Front holds its first demonstration in London.   |

### ***1971***

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|-------------------------|---|
| 2 February - 4 February | Sit-in at Aston University.   |
| 9 February              | 600 students march through Liverpool as part of the N.U.S. grants campaign.   |
| 6 March                 | Demonstrations by women in Liverpool and London in anticipation of International Women's Day on 8 March.  |
| April                   | Digby Jacks, a communist, is elected as President of the N.U.S..  |
| November                | N.U.S. decides not to attempt to affiliate to the T.U.C..<br><br>The Department of Education and Science produces a Consultative Document on the future of student union finances and government. |
| 5 November              | End of a 6 day hunger strike by 20 Liverpool University students. It aims to highlight the plight of the Bangladeshi people, and their struggle for independence.                                 |
| 17 November             | 3,000 students take part in a demonstration in Birmingham on Students' Union autonomy. 20,000 take part in a demonstration in London.   |
| 8 December              | N.U.S. Day of Action on Autonomy. 400,000 students are involved in protest of some kind. 50,000 attend a demonstration in London.   |

### ***1972***

January	The government 'shelves' its proposals on students' unions.
3 - 5 February	Sit-in at Cambridge University.
5 February	Demonstration in London in the aftermath of 'Bloody Sunday' in Northern Ireland.
13 February	15 members of the Women's Liberation Movement disrupt a charity 'panto slave auction' at Liverpool University. Violence ensues and the auction is abandoned.
April	N.U.S. Conference produces a 12 point plan aimed at improving women's position in society.

\* This chronology is not comprehensive in that it does not list all of the protests which students took part in between 1965 and 1972. It lists both large and small demonstrations, as well as events in the wider world, which are of interest to this study, and for the benefit of the reader.

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